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HENRY DE POMEROY;

OR,

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
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HENRY DE POMEROY;

OR,

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

A LEGEND OF CORNWALL AND DEVON.

BY MRS. BRAY.

AUTHOR OF

"TRELAWNY," "TRIALS OF THE HEART,"
"THE WHITE HOODS," "DE FOIX," "BORDERS OF
THE TAMAR AND TAVY," ETC.

Can such things be
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?

SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1842.

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HENRY DE POMEROY.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

Though sluggards deem it but a foolish chase,
And marvel men should quit their easy chair,
The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace,
O ! there is sweetness in the mountain air,
And life that bloated ease can never hope to share.

BYRON'S *Childe Harold*.

I HAD long entertained the wish to visit that part of Devon known by the name of the South Hams, but not so designated, I presume, as an ingenious historian once conjectured, in honour of Ammon, who, he states, was worshipped by the Druid priesthood on the southern coast of that county ; for as the word Ham was anciently applied to a low pasture ground, situated near a river or the sea, this circumstance alone seems

to point out the source whence the Hams derived their name, as the cattle ground of Devon.

But I will no longer detain my reader respecting the disputed etymology of one of the most lovely portions of our county; suffice it to say, that my wish to visit these far-famed valleys was, at length, kindly indulged by my partner, not only through this journey, but that of life also; and, in the summer of 1838, we commenced that memorable expedition, replete with consequences of so much import to ourselves, and, I trust, to you, my gentle reader, in your progress through the work, more especially should you find in it wherewithal to amuse an idle hour, or to afford you any useful information. And I would strongly advise you to bear in mind the maxim of a very great author, who was also a very good man, as it will be profitable to us both; namely, “Not to fall into the bad habit of reading too critically,” by which he means ill-humouredly, caustically, sourly; but rather to recollect that an author’s book is,

generally speaking, like the author himself, a compound, not all good, nor yet all bad :—

“ Our virtues would be proud if our vices whipt them not,
And our vices would despair, if they were not cherished
by our virtues.”

Remember, reader, how much of time and thought goes to the composition of a book, (if it be at all worth the perusal,) through which you glide onward in a few hours with so much ease. Think of the days, weeks, and months of study that an author, at least in many instances, must undergo, merely to prepare his own mind for a subject that is to instruct or delight thine. Think of his health, his temper, his feelings, his anxiety, the trials he must endure, the wear and tear of these things, in the progress of writing, printing, and publishing. And then think how liable he is to be mistaken by others, or to be misrepresented by those who are his enemies, to be censured by the ill-natured, and hated by the envious, who are not the least bitter of his foes. Think, too, of his

labour ; that the spirit of his subject, like other spirits, will sometimes be elusive as well as delusive ; and that, like the devil and Owen Glendower, he will not always “ come when you do call for him.”

Take, therefore, whatever thou canst find good in an author, and lay it to thy heart, and esteem him and thyself the better for having good thoughts and feelings in common. And what thou likest not, or what liketh not thee, give it, at least, so much of thy charity as to think, hadst thou been in the writer's place, thou mightest not have done better, and such thoughts as these shall never harm thee. And when, also, the author's labour is considered, recollect the exclamation of good old Bishop Hall, who lived in the times of King James the First, when he thus comments on one of the vanities of this world in the pains of composition :—“ What scratching of heads do we find in the closets of our scholars.” Think, therefore, gentle reader, of the difficulties of authorship with some com-

miseration, and make a large allowance for faults, wherever you find something of *nature*, for that is the salt of a book whatever be its subject, and that ought to cover a multitude of sins, though not if they be sins that militate either against morals or religion. For in thy most critical mood, my reader, ever bear in mind that the priest and the barber, in the expurgation of Don Quixote's library, would not suffer the housekeeper and niece to send flying out of the window, as an accumulation to the pile of condemned books, *Tirante the White*, simply because there was in it so much of nature that the knights ate, drank, slept, made their wills, and died in their beds like other people, "with several other things," said the priest, "not to be found in other books of the kind, and, therefore, do we spare him." And if, my reader, you should now and then find a passage too grave, or too copious, take as thy remedy the maxim of the very judicious Spanish critic just quoted, that "There cannot be too much of what is really

good ;” and, be it also recollected, that, though a writer may fail to teach patience in the argument of his book, it is well if he does so by his own example, to bear all that may await him, for good or evil, with an equal mind ; and those who gain the admirable virtue of a *practical patience*, acquire that which will make any burthen light in their progress through the world. To sum up all, let me recommend to you, my gentle reader, to select, not only from these pages, but from whatever you may read, the passages or morsels most healthful in themselves and most suited to your taste, and leave the rest for those who are indifferent about the matter.

But, no longer to digress, I shall commence at once with noticing that part of our journey which gave rise to the following work, our visit to the very ancient and very interesting ruins of the Castle of Berry Pomeroy, near Totness, in Devonshire.

My companion had visited it many years be-

fore, but now scarcely recognized it again ; so much was it altered by the course of time. To me it was all new ground ; and my impressions, therefore, were perhaps more lively than his on the present occasion. I do not wonder that he found some difficulty in recognizing an old acquaintance here, for the very gateway of the castle was so hidden by trees, and so overgrown with ivy, that, on a first approach, it is no easy matter to make out what it is.

We had left the carriage in which we drove to the spot ; and a nice little girl, who told us she was ten years old, had accompanied us from a cottage near the entrance of the wood, with the keys of the castle ; and under her guidance, we were now to proceed to the inspection of the ruins.

Passing under the gateway, we ascended to what is generally called the chapel ; but which was evidently the guard-room, above the entrance, as the opening for the fall of the portcullis still remains in the walls. Here are three

arches supported on rough columns, of a very ancient appearance. The flanking towers of the gateway lead to the ramparts; and all this part of the building, I am convinced, is of high antiquity: most likely the work of that De Pomeroy on whom the manor was bestowed by William the Conqueror, and who was the original founder of this once stupendous castle.

The most striking parts of the edifice, those situated within the interior court, are, as may be seen at a glance, of the Tudor age. The doorways of the roofless apartments, the mullions of the square-headed windows, &c. are all of the period of Henry the Seventh. Nor does this fact at all invalidate the account given by Prince, in the "Worthies of Devon," when he mentions that a Seymour, at a subsequent period, laid out twenty thousand pounds on this part of the building. Such a sum might easily, even in his days, be expended, on improvements and repairs; and Prince states that this large expenditure was principally devoted to the costly decorations of the interior.

When Henry the Seventh ascended the throne, he took the Castle of Berry Pomeroy from the Baron La Zouch, on account of his having espoused the cause of Richard the Third, and bestowed it on that celebrated knight, Sir Piers Edgcumbe, who had rendered him such essential services, when he was Earl of Richmond, and only a pretender to the crown. Every part of the kingdom was so drained by the wars of the red and white roses, that the monasteries and churches were almost totally neglected, and many of the castles nearly ruined for want of repair after the dilapidations they had undergone in these long protracted contests, so detrimental to the welfare of the kingdom at large.

Peace once more restored by the union of the roses, the princes, barons, and knights had leisure to repair, rebuild, and adorn the ecclesiastical and civil edifices of every description. That they did so in the west is most conspicuous, as there is scarcely a church or ancient mansion in that part of England, but it bears

evidence of having undergone some repairs or additions about the time of Henry the Seventh.

That the gateway and the most ancient portions of Berry Pomeroy are of Norman construction, I do not doubt. That something was added to the original castle by the celebrated Sir Henry de Pomeroy, who figured in the reign of Richard the First, is very likely; and that La Zouch also repaired and made additions to it is more than probable; but that the whole of the *interior* building, the palace, (for so it might be called,) was the work of Sir Piers Edgcumbe, admits, I think, of no question, as it has none of that florid decoration, none of that mixture of the Grecian with the Gothic, which we may see in similar works of the time of Henry the Eighth, and still more so in the heavy and ungraceful architecture of the reign of Elizabeth.

After a careful survey of the whole, we could not help saying that Berry Pomeroy would be a most interesting ruin, if it were not so encumbered with brambles and trees, that in many places

you can see nothing else. That portion of the castle which is stationed on the esplanade above a rocky precipice, at the back of the building, is so completely surrounded by trees that you are scarcely conscious you are near a precipice, till on its very verge. Indeed at this spot, only heaps of rubbish indicate the foundations of exterior walls, long since fallen into ruin, and the castle is so much injured and dilapidated along the whole range of the esplanade, that only fragments of four lofty towers remain. Here, therefore, the ruin is most complete.

On our coming to this place, our little fairy-footed guide took us to the very verge of the precipice, and said—but I must not say what she said as it would be anticipating: suffice it then to mention that on the very spot where such extraordinary circumstances are said to have occurred, the little creature related to us the romantic tradition respecting that Sir Henry de Pomeroy who flourished in the reign of Richard the First, and to whom I have already

alluded as one of the lords of Berry Pomeroy Castle. This tale of "old tradition," I had before heard; but there was a double interest in listening to it under the shadow of these ancient walls.

The same intelligent little person added, "and this is the place also where the castle was taken in the time of Charles the First. They took it by guns; great guns planted on yonder hill," pointing, as she spoke, to a lofty height that was opposite to the eminence on which we stood. The story of the castle having been stormed on this side with artillery, sufficiently accounts for its being more battered than in any other part of the building. Some persons have, I know, doubted the fact of the siege during the civil wars; but so many circumstances exist to render it more than probable, that I entertain no doubt whatever of the truth. Whilst we were viewing the ruins, the child's mother arrived, and expressing a fear that her daughter had not been able to give us such

information as might be required, she confirmed the little girl's story about the De Pomeroiy in the time of Richard the First, and that concerning the battering of the castle by a canonnade in the days of the great rebellion.

The castle, as I have noticed, was evidently built at different periods, and should it continue a few years longer, the confusion to the tyro antiquary will be greater than it is already; as, for the purpose of strengthening the building, and also, for securing it against the inspection of gratuitous visiters, walls with rude emattlements have recently been built from one part of the structure to another, giving it a patchwork appearance, very incompatible with picturesque beauty.

Being desirous of seeing the ruins if possible from below, we inquired if there was any path that would lead us thither. On informing us there was, the good woman put us again under the guidance of the little girl; who now took us to see a large beech-tree which, she

said, was considered to be as old as the castle. The tree is certainly of a very extraordinary size, but by no means of such great antiquity. Its lowest branches were at no mean height, and yet persons must have given themselves some trouble to climb it, as above them we saw several names cut in the bark. A single beech-tree, perhaps, may not produce the effect, but from what I have observed at Mount Edgcumbe, and at Spitchwick, where there are several beeches together, no grass will grow under them ; this, I believe, is owing to the fall of the leaves, which have something in them unfavourable to vegetation.

By a winding path through the wood, we descended the hill, at the foot of which runs a little brook : this, collected into a pond, turns a mill that, no doubt, belonged to the castle ; as (after scrambling up the opposite bank, whence we had a somewhat less obstructed view of the ruins,) when we reached the summit, we found the mill was built with some share of

ancient architectural ornament. Soon after seeing this, we bade adieu to Berry Pomeroy.

I must not here omit to mention that on the day after, when we were about half a mile on our road to Torquay, we once more met our little guide. We were much pleased to see her again, as I had regretted I had not asked her name. This I now did; and the answer was Mary Chaff. Not exactly catching the last word, I asked her to spell her name; and with all the naïveté of childhood, she began with the beginning and spelt every letter of Mary Chaff with the utmost deliberation. With a laugh, and an additional present, we then took our leave of her, as she stood making her little courtesies as long as we were in sight.

As we drove on we took a last look at the distant towers of Berry Pomeroy Castle, our minds filled with the recollection of the impressive events there said to have occurred in the romantic age of Richard of the Lion Heart, that most gallant and crusading king.

But these circumstances respecting Sir Henry de Pomeroy, are not all that have come down to us. Another and no less striking tradition concerning the same Sir Henry is still preserved in Cornwall, in the neighbourhood of St. Michael's Mount, in which celebrated spot it is said to have occurred. This last mentioned story is noticed, though very slightly, by a few lines in an ancient Chronicler; and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, the truth of both traditions has never been questioned by any biographer or historian of ancient or modern times.

I have only to add, that having already published three works of fiction, and one topographical and historical, connected with the counties of Cornwall and Devon, in the former of which I availed myself of many fragments of tradition, to raise "a superstructure of fiction on a ground-work of truth," I was induced to undertake the present partly by my own wish, and partly from being urged to do so by more than one literary friend, natives of the west,

who had repeatedly pointed out to me the traditional fragments of Henry de Pomeroy, as a most desirable subject for my series of works on the counties of Cornwall and Devon.

One friend, now, alas! no more, of considerable literary taste, so repeatedly urged me “to call up,”—such was the playful phrase,—the monks of Tavistock Abbey, in the days of their power and their pride, that I promised I would endeavour to combine with the subject in question some scenes of ancient times, in the far famed and favoured Abbey of the Tavy.

For the rest, desirous to please the more serious classes of my readers, I can assure them, I have attempted to blend with the events and characters of imagination, such sketches of the manners and customs of the twelfth century, the period of the narrative, as I trust will be acceptable in an historical point of view: and though to cite ancient authorities, or modern antiquaries, for every instance of obsolete manners, would be an insufferable piece of pedantry in

a romance, yet I feel it due to myself to state that for whatever of this nature will be found in the following pages, it has the sanction of historical and unquestionable authority.

A. E. B.

The Vicarage, Tavistock,
April 10th, 1841.

CHAPTER I.

“An old, old Monastery,—
Withal it lies, perhaps, a little low,
Because the monks preferred a hill behind,
To shelter their devotion from the wind.
It stood embosomed in a happy valley.”

BYRON.

ABOUT the latter part of the twelfth century, the Abbey of Tavistock, of which so few remains now exist to attest its former splendour, was in the very height of its beauty, wealth, and power. A Saxon prince had been its founder; kings had contributed by their munificence to its opulence and its immunities. Barbarians and invaders had burnt and pillaged its sacred cells; but it had risen again, like the fabled phoenix, from its ashes, and with its renovated existence acquired a dignity and

strength that soon placed it above every other religious house, saving that of Glastonbury, in the West of England.

The Virgin and St. Rumon were the heavenly patrons to whom it was dedicated; and nobles, churchmen, and knights were alike eager to promote the opulence and grandeur of so celebrated a foundation, nothing doubting that the good of their own souls was secured past being shaken by the enemy, by every stone of the building they helped to pile with so much liberality of spirit.

For learning, also, our abbey was in great repute. Almer the Saxon was its first Abbot; and Livingus, afterwards Bishop of St. Germain in Cornwall, famous alike for his munificence, his misfortunes, and the high estimation in which he was held by Canute the Great, was in a manner its second founder; and in the abbey he had so benefited, Livingus, at last, laid his bones. There, likewise, did Edwy Atheling seek refuge from the jealousies of the

Danish usurper, and dying, was buried near the grave of Orgar, Earl or Heretoge of Devon, his Saxon ancestor, and the illustrious founder of the house. But to cite the names of all those to whom history has done honour, and who were all more or less connected with the Abbey of Tavistock, would be a task better suited to the professed antiquary than to such chroniclers as ourselves, who propose, in our narrative, to treat of persons and things of a very different character.

At the time of which we write, many portions of the abbey even now remaining, were not in existence, such being of a more recent period. The monastery was then a noble, solid, but somewhat sombre pile, built in that style of architecture popularly called Saxon. It was characterised by massive towers and walls, not so lofty as they were strong; by deep-set, round-headed windows and door-ways, with their short clustered columns and their circular mouldings, carved with the zig-zag and other fanciful orna-

ments, that swept along the whole span of the arch. These door-ways were, like all other parts of the building, too heavy for elegance ; but, when viewed in their general outline, there was something simple and imposing in the massiveness of their architecture, that would have been destroyed by any additions of a more refined taste.

Indeed, the Anglo Saxon or Norman architecture (for one was much the same as the other, prior to the Conquest,) was a style of building that disdained to rest its claims on the graces of detail, or the elegances of form. It was like one of those hardy barons, of the early times of which we write, who found in a solid bulk and a stout frame of sinews and muscles, with a noble aspect, (though calculated to awe rather than to captivate the beholder,) a sufficient counterbalance for the want of that more light and graceful figure and appearance, which, by a different education, and a greater refinement of manners, characterized the youth of

France and of England also, in the days of less personal hardihood in action.

On the banks of the Tavy (that took its rise in the very heart of Dartmoor, and here made its rapid course over a channel amid picturesque rocks, surrounded by woods in the bosom of a valley, watered by a thousand streams,) stood this noble abbey, at once the support, the benefactor, and the glory of the country and the town from which it took its name. Its turreted towers, and its strong embattled walls, rose within a short space of the river, that in gentle murmurs, or when swollen by rains, in foaming billows, rolled at their feet.

The abbey church reared itself above those walls, and all other of the monastic buildings, and seemed, in the solemnity of its aspect, to give an air of quiet sanctity to the surrounding scene. These objects, most impressive in themselves, were, when viewed in combination, altogether calculated to produce that romantic gloom, so replete with poetic feeling, which associates itself

so entirely with scenes of seclusion and of holy and contemplative retirement from the world.

Within a small apartment belonging to the offices of this delightfully situated abbey, one summer's day towards the close of the twelfth century, there sat a little party enjoying themselves at noon, when the Lord Abbot, the monks, and some of the novices were taking what was called their *meridian*; that is their day sleep: a very necessary repose in a house whose duties and offices in the church obliged most of its members to be out of their beds during no inconsiderable portion of the night.

The little party of which we now speak was of a social character, and entertained at the particular invitation of Thomas the Cellarer in his own especial snug cell, conveniently placed where none of the more rigid officers of the household could be in any way annoyed, if now and then any too obstreperous sounds of mirth and jollity, when the wine was in and the wit was out, might proceed from its confines; nor was it so near the

inspectors as to be constantly exposed to the eye of any jealous *obedientary* as he was called, or too prying monk, whose turn it might be for the week to keep a watchful look-out over the brothers to see they lived within the rule of the godly St. Bennet, for Benedictine monks were those of our abbey.

True it is that the cellarer had little cause for fear, as few of the brotherhood were disposed to be at cross purposes with him, or to look at all too closely after his ways ; for never since the days of Livingus, had this excellent abbey been famed for anything like an observance of too much rule. It was not a house that made holiness a penance. The paths of peace, with somewhat of the plenty that peace is proverbially said to bring along with her, had been very generally held as the pleasantest path to heaven, by almost all the abbots, priors, sub-priors, and monks, vowed to the honour of the Virgin and St. Rumon, in this blessed society.

There was something in the very air of the

house that was thriving; for the brothers commonly grew fat upon it; notwithstanding fast-days and vigils were regularly proclaimed by the tolling of the bells, and the calends of the monastery. The cellarer, however, albeit the Lord Abbot was a very good apothecary, and the Lord Bishop of the diocese, according to the custom of the age, an excellent physician, took much credit to himself, that in Tavistock Abbey there was at all times a lean hospital and a fat kitchen.

This worthy Thomas was looked upon, if not as a father, yet somewhat as a godfather to the whole fraternity; for he stood sponsor for them all in sundry particulars, and promised in their names, that they should eschew all ale that was not up to the true strength of old Saxon huff-cap; that roasted swans were nothing too good at the feast of the Virgin in honour of her ascension; and that carp, cooked in choice malmsey wine, was a dish orthodox for days of fast and mortification; and it may here be stated, that, among many other privileges, the cellarer possessed one

calculated to make him exceedingly popular with his brother monks, as they all benefited by it : that of his being authorized to ask for certain indulgences for the whole fraternity,—such as that he might be permitted to order the dishes for refecton for a certain space of time, just before the precentor was to rehearse, in chapter, what was called *the sentence of the rule*. This being nothing less than a particular rule of the holy St. Bennet which enforced a strict observance of the most poor and abstemious diet.

True it is that this golden code of abstinence was at all times hung up and displayed in a most conspicuous part of the house. But in order that it might not hang as useless on the walls of the monastery, (as we sometimes see an old hat, coat, or straw figure hang in a bed of peas, to frighten the birds, till, by finding it does them no harm, they become at last so familiar with the scarecrow that they transgress with boldness, and pilfer all around with the utmost impunity,) it was wisely ordained that on certain days, four

times in a year, this self-denying rule should be first read aloud, and afterwards enforced, excepting when the cellarer had previously asked an indulgence for the brothers. No wonder, therefore, an official who had the exercise of such a privilege as this within his own power, should be one towards whom most men looked with an eye of favour within the abbey walls; and, indeed, on all occasions, the eatables and drinkables were so much under his control, that, like Doctor Pedro Rezio Turte Defuero, with the luckless governor, Sancho Panza, his wand or word could give wings to the dishes, however excellent, and lay them under interdict to all but the very heads of the house.

So influential a man as the cellarer was not without state. He had his court days, a sort of "petty sessions of his own;" when swans, geese, turkeys, and most other feathered fowl were brought before him, alive or dead, for account; and butts of ale, cider, and wine were laid in store by this

provident official; whilst the kitchener looked after the less aristocratic viands of bullocks, sheep, goats, and lambs. Indeed, so many and so various were the duties, privileges, and profits of this worthy, that we should weary our readers did we recite them at large. We shall, therefore, but add, that at this monastery he held, also, his court of thieves and robbers, and sometimes gave sentence on animals not quite so harmless as ducks and geese; he had, likewise, power over the highways on the abbey lands, so that not a stick or stone could be removed without his consent; and though last, not least of his prerogatives, he was the man to whom the porter of the abbey gates was obliged to send the keys, after locking up for the night, when no one could enter or pass without the walls unless by his most especial favour; whilst his authority was absolute over all such as transgressed the rules, by being absent after complin, the last evening service in the church.

The cellarer's personal distinctions were many. He had his two palfreys; his servant, in the livery of the house; and in addition to his comfortable monk's frock, he was allowed a good robe of clerk's cloth, with its hood of lamb's fur, to keep him warm and dry whenever he rode forth in foul weather for the service of the brotherhood, in whose welfare he took so lively an interest in all the seasons of game and venison throughout the whole year.

Brother Thomas was one of those who followed literally the injunction of the apostle; for when merry — and the note of his cheerful spirits, like the crow of chanticler, began at morning's dawn—he always sang psalms. He was jolly and rubicund; had a full cheek, a sleek skin, a laughing eye, a nose like a peony in full blow, and a shaven crown that was round and bright as a new tennis ball. His voice was full and sounding, and so nice was his ear that, like Master Nicholas, the clerk, in Chaucer's Tale, he made

the gayest melody on the giterne, the ribible, or the saultrie, and

“ So sweetly, that all the chamber rong,
And Angelus ad virginem he song,
And often blessed was his merry throat.”

Such was our cellarer : with him sat the sacrist ; church bells, banners, and tapers, were under his control ; and the lantern, which it was his duty to carry before the priest, after he had deposited the text upon the altar, in his way to the lecture, now lay at his feet ready for the hour of service ; a sure note that he did not intend to budge from his present seat till the vespers might require his attendance in the church.

The sacrist was a little, thin, grave-looking man ; one that a sinner might mistake for a saint, though he was no hypocrite. But for all his grave appearance, he liked a jest in a quiet way, and was fond of a dry humour rather than a dry cup. He was considered to be wise ;

but he held there was no wisdom like that which arises from counsel ; consequently, whenever he had any matter that he deemed to be of import to take in hand, he never ventured upon it till such time as he had considered the affair with his especial chum, Thomas the cellarer, over a flagon of Rhenish wine.

With these pious monks—who might both be said to hold office in the monastery, which, like most ministers in office, they had no desire to resign — sat a somewhat singular companion for men so holy, and within their own walls. This was a certain individual known all the country round, and a very great man in his own estimation, being no less a person than Patch, for such was his name, domestic fool of my Lady Alicia de Beaumont, of Wilsworthy Castle, an edifice situated in the adjoining parish, and very nigh Dartmoor.

Patch was in the fool's attire common to his day, and we have seen in our travels (for we wish our readers to understand that we have

travelled, and, therefore, have seen many “strange things,”) an old and curious picture of the middle ages, in the museum at Antwerp, which so exactly represents our Patch, that we are much disposed to think he must have been the original of the portrait. It represents the clown in full dress; his nether socks (long pantaloons) being *mi parti*, that is, different in colour, the right leg scarlet, the left blue; wooden shoes, like clogs, are on his feet; he wears a tight jerkin guarded with red and blue; whilst his cap, the gayest part of his costume, is adorned with a red cock’s comb at the crown, long ears, like those of an ass, at the sides, and a long pendent point on which jangles a row of bells.

In the days of Patch, a bauble surmounted by an ass’s head and a pair of bagpipes, on which one of his trade often played, were likewise the especial appointments of the fool; but at the moment we introduce him to our readers, Patch had neither bauble nor bagpipe in his hands, but a cup of good red wine, which he very much

preferred to any symbol of his office, or any other distinction.

Patch was a little fellow ; and though at the time of which we write there was a certain degree of knavery and even of malice, which under the mask of folly often did much mischief, attached to the character of the fool, yet we must in truth say there was no natural malice in the composition of Patch ; and as his noble mistress had never allowed him to be hunted and teased by the pages and the boys, nor to be worried in any way, so as to excite or call forth any evil dispositions, he was a very harmless creature, a mere fool for sport and amusement, such as was kept in every palace or castle of prince, bishop, baron, knight, or, in short, of any persons of rank of the period.

Patch, as we have said, was a little fellow, slight and active, with a handsome leg and foot, of which he was so proud, that his socks and his shoes were ever of the newest and the best ; and

he had fallen into the habit 'of walking with his toes turned out in a manner bordering on the ludicrous, from the great desire he felt that these distinctions of his person should attract observation. His head was small, and covered with curly black hair ; his nose was not set straight on his face ; all the features of which were irregular, and so flexible, that he had the power of contorting them into the most hideous and ludicrous grimaces ; even into that of giving a sort of caricature representation of sundry animals, whose sounds and voices he could imitate with wonderful truth and ease.

Patch had bright, black, fiery eyes, and a pair of eyebrows not unworthy the glances that shot from the orbs beneath them, to which they gave both character and additional effect. His forehead, according to the system of Spurzheim and Gall, would have been held as indicative of small space for the brains, as it receded very much, like the forehead of the dog. Truth to

tell, an over portion of sound judgment was not the characteristic of Patch's mind under any circumstances.

His great merit rested in his talents as a grimacier and imitator. He could grin like one of the carved gothic heads on the oak stalls in the church; lengthen his visage when he would indicate the physiognomy of an ass, bringing forward the long ears of his fool's cap to assist the portraiture; and would give out the bray of that animal in startling perfection, whenever he found himself in a company where he thought sympathy was particularly due to the qualities of such a creature. Like Daniel Dove, the cock, with his "embattled comb," would respond to his crowing; the very hens would run about the poultry-yard and flap and agitate their wings as he clucked to them, as if in search of their chickens; or as if they fancied that a sister hen had laid an egg, when all the Dame Partletts deem themselves bound to celebrate it with cackling. And like Daniel, even

the solemnity of the owl, with its half-closed sleepy eye, and its ominous hooting too-whoo, were not beyond the powers of Patch in imitation ; powers that made him the delight of children, who would stare with all their eyes, laugh, shriek, run to him, lean their heads on his lap, or stand in silent wonder, as he went through his exhibition. And such was his perfection in imitating the cats, that, like the luckless Diego in *Gil Blas*, (who made those caterwaulings the signal of his meetings with Dame Margelina, the old Doctor's wife,) he once got his head broken by a stone pelted at him in mistake for a real grimalkin. When, in addition to these accomplishments, it is told that Patch had the most ready caper at a morris-dance, could play on the hand-bells, was master of a thousand antics, and could sing at counter-point, (a method of singing something like our glees,) his value will be more readily understood in a family such as the Lady Alicia's, at a time when few but the clergy could read, and when domestic occupations, to wile

away the hours of an easy life and a rainy day, were of the fewest and most confined description.

The natural disposition of Patch was that of extreme good-nature. He would do anything, run anywhere, to serve anybody, who gave him but a good-natured word ; and as he had a sort of idle curiosity, that prompted him to learn all the news he could collect, he was ever on the alert, a professed gossip, and knew every woman, old or young, famed for chattering, within the compass of his walks, and those were only limited by the strength of his legs in his wanderings from home.

Now the cellarer being a great lover of news also, but from his official character not being able to collect it quite so readily as one whose professed folly caused no questions he asked to be deemed impertinent, was not at all sorry to extract from Patch, at the very cheap rate of a cup of wine, all the intelligence he could gather, respecting divers noble persons and families in the neighbourhood. These morsels of news were not simply as choice scraps for

his own entertainment ; for the Lord Abbot was not inapt to collect from the cellarer as the cellarer did from Patch, the gossip of the country, though from a very different motive. By means, therefore, of that ingenious art of cooking news, so practised and perfected in this small town, even in its days of Saxon celebrity, there was nothing easier than by adding here, and twisting and turning there, and putting in a few grains of scandal and the sauce of a little malice, to serve as dainty a dish of news for the table of my Lord Abbot, as could possibly be desired on any occasion of wonderment, idleness, or envy, in a country town, where there were so many little minds to be gratified by little means. Yet we do not wish to imply that Brother Thomas thus gathered his intelligence for any especial purpose of mischief ; for we can safely aver he was a very friendly man over a cup of wine,—that he was singularly good-humoured when he was pleased ; and so far was he from doing wrong by premeditation, that

he never even suspected he could do wrong at all.

With this object in view, the cellarer now sat with his two friends round a little table, on which stood no insignificant portion of a delicate roasted swan ; flanked by a loaf of monks' bread, and some manchets of the best Simnel. Of choice liquors there were abundance ; from portly huff-cap, malmsey, and metheglin, down to simple cowslip wine ; for the cellarer having absolute rule over these matters, kept a little buffet well stored at hand, the contents being selected from the treasures of his own especial crypt ; and if any objections were made to a provision so tempting to solitary indulgence, the plea of " only by way of sample," or " just to taste what might be best suited to the palate of my Lord Abbot and his guests," were answers prompt and never questioned.

One other individual helped to complete the party ; a hound, a favourite of the Abbot, when he made up a company to go to his hunting-

seat at Morwell-house ; and never till of late had the dog been left behind on any such occasions of joyous sport. He now lay stretched at the cellarer's feet. Some allusion had been made to him in conversation.

“And pray,” said Patch, as he put down the flagon, from which he had taken no small draught ; “what ails Woden there ?” pointing to the hound, for the names of the ancient Saxon deities were often given at this period, as a mark of contempt, by the Normans, to their dogs. “Woden hath become something like me of late, more to be found in the house than in the field ; looking after the porridge, and letting go free the hares. Woden hath truly the wisdom of years growing upon him, as well as some of its grey hairs ; he likes best the fire-side and a soft cushion ; wherefore is it that he goes not forth to the field ?”

“His scent fails him,” replied the cellarer ; “and my Lord Abbot likes not a hound at fault.”

“Blow vinegar in his nose,” said the fool; “’tis a sovereign remedy to restore his scent to a hound, or to call up a lethargic man. And do you, sir cellarer, in your wisdom construe me this. Wherefore is our King Richard, him of the lion’s heart, like the hound with a vinegared nose?”

The cellarer studied a minute; looked up at the ceiling and down on the floor, then at the grinning and self satisfied propounder of the question, whose very air seemed to say that his meaning, though pregnant, lay too deep for a common wit. Then the cellarer rubbed his hand over his shaven crown, and finally repeated the question, weighing every word of it with the slowest delivery, and at last looked just as wise as he did before.

“Thou canst not hit it,” said Patch. “Do thou try thy wits, master sacrist. Wherefore is the hound with the vinegared nose, like our King Richard?”

“Why, may be,” replied the sacrist, “it may

have been as startling to his highness, as vinegar to a hound's nose, to find himself on a sudden prisoner to the Duke of Austria, when he looked to return to his good land of England ; for such things are apt to startle a man mightily, even as do our bells the newcomers, when I give an unexpected pull at the ropes ; therefore I conceive —”

“ Anything but that which comes nigh the matter,” said the fool ; “ thou hast ever but one thing at work in thy brains, to beat on thy wits, like the clapper of thy own bells. Do what thou wilt, all with thee is a bell, master sacrist. If thou walkest, thy arms swing upwards, as if they were ringing the lauds ; thy discourse is ever to the same tune,—it is but as so many changes on bell-ringing. Thou hast the very sound of the matins in thy talk, and when thou takest thy turn to lecture in the pulpit to the brothers, the curfew itself sounds not a more drowsy chime to the ear of a borrel churl after a day's labour ; and they are all soon fast asleep.”

The sacrist frowned on Patch, but a fool's vein is not easily checked; so on he went: "I tell thee, man, thy very life is but an epitome of thy calling. It needs one of thy own ropes to draw thee to any good work. And thy conscience is not to be awakened unless it be by an alarum, like thy own bells at a fire. Thou livest by a rope, and may be thou wilt die by a rope; seeing thy abbey hath the right of pit and gallows."

"And of the stocks and rod, for the legs and backs of fools who prate too freely with their betters," said the sacristan, angrily; for, even from one licensed in his folly, he liked not too much freedom. But the cellarer, wishing for no brawls between friends, filled out another cup, and proposed that they should all drink a speedy deliverance to King Richard, and hoped that Patch would expound his riddle, as well as pledge the royal health.

"Well, then, here 'tis," said Patch. "The

royal Richard hath borrowed from my trade of late, and hath played the fool, at no man's bidding but his own. He hath left his kingdom to go after foreign wars, and now that is like to leave him ; even like a hen in the mouth of a fox, that is on the start to run away with her, and when good man the master would run after her, he finds the door locked upon him, and Renard safe with his fowl. Even so, then, like to a once brave hound that hath lost its scent for the game, did our gallant king, whilst following after Saladin abroad, lose all scent of the treason that was going on at home, till, like vinegar in the nose, his brother John's treachery, being suddenly brought to his knowledge, waked him up with its stinging ; and then would he return to look after his affairs in England fast enough, but may be too late, for the Duke of Austria lay in the way, and our fighting king was made a prisoner. Now do you take mine enigma, and is it not an ingenious one ? even like those

of Sir Æsop, that Cædmon, the Saxon boy, tells of as a yule tale, round the red hearth and the blazing logs."

"'Tis far-fetched," said the sacristan ; " thy wits are muddy."

" Not so is thy ale," replied Patch ; " and I will even crush another cup with thee for fellowship, for my legs are weary, and the spirit that sustains them somewhat faint ; it needeth cheering."

" Hast thou been far to-day ?" inquired the cellarer ; " at what taverners hast thou been news gathering ? anything stirring ? anything worth the carrying ?"

" Aye, marry is there," said Patch, " more than my head could bear ; a burthen of news that would weary a sumpter mule, though used to carry the wallet of a pardoner and his bags of relics from the Holy Land on sale, his ' pigs' bones' converted into those of the thumbs and toes of saints."

" Peace, fool, peace," exclaimed the cellarer ;

“no jesting with sacred things, and within the walls, too, of this holy house. Holy St. Bennet ! it were as much as my office were worth and all its havings, were it known that I suffered a fool’s prate on such matters within my cell. Down on thy knees, on the instant ; ask pardon, and I will give thee absolution ; ask it on the instant, and then we may go on with our discourse,” continued the cellarer, following that rule of the house which enjoined immediate pardon being asked and absolution given for all offences in conversation and sins of a lighter kind. Patch obeyed. “And now for thy news,” said brother Thomas.

“Here it is then,” replied Patch. “The queen-mother, the royal Eleanor, is come over, with a power from Wales, in support of the rights of her imprisoned son, King Richard. I had the news this morning, as I called in at the Lord de St. Loe’s buttery hatch ; and there is more news still.”

“What is it?” inquired the cellarer, eagerly.

“Why, ’tis thought,” continued Patch, after a pause, “that widows will rise in price, and maidens become cheaper, by reason of the ransom of King Richard.”

“How, fool, how?” said the cellarer.

“I will tell you anon,” answered Patch, “and I had it from a clerk of good account, one who can both read and write, and hath a turn for gramery; he, therefore, knoweth the truth of things. The king’s ransom is stated at the value of his highness’s valour, not at that of his people’s means; so, besides lands to be yielded up in France and elsewhere, there are more pounds to be paid in money—payment in tale—than I can reckon up by memory, though I can count with any man by the fingers.”

“The religious houses are, questionless, not to be taxed for the king’s ransom,” said the sacristan; “they will pray for his majesty’s speedy release.”

“They must do something more than that for it,” said Patch, “for the limbo of the Duke of Austria is not like purgatory, there is no praying a soul out of it. Like the gates of our blessed St. Peter, the duke opens not those of his cage to let slip the royal bird of England, without the Peter pence being paid. It is noised abroad that every one above the degree of a socman is to pay a fourth part of his revenue for the year towards the ransom, ay, and as much of his moveable goods or their value, and every knight the sum of twenty shillings, and now comes the cream of the matter and of my discourse—the fee for marrying a widow, who is under crown custody, is to be equal to that of marrying a maid under the same: till this thing happened, to raise the ransom of a king, the fee for marrying a widow was but half as much. And then the abbeys, it is said, are to give the value of a year’s wool.”

“Only those of the orders of Cisteaux and of

Sempringham," said the cellarer; "they were ever forward in putting forth claims for privileges to King Richard, and now will they find the truth of the proverb, 'Many go for wool and come home shorn.' The blessed brothers of St. Benedict will, I trust, get off more easily. It is not good to tax those who are as the fountains of learning in the land. England were barbarous still, like those wolves, the hordes of the north, but for the Benedictines. Learning hath its labours, and ought to have its immunities; for we, who spend our days in abstinence and study, and in fasts, and our nights in prayer—"

"Pray, brother," said Patch, "when are the feast days of this house? for, seeing that thy fasts are so very tolerable, I would gladly partake of them. I never here taste worse fare than thy simnel or wheaten bread, though at home I have often the brown loaf. Thou must have an honest miller, or a miller's daughter that favours thee from the choicest sack."

"Holy Mary! there she stands," said the

cellarer, and he pointed, as he spoke, to a laughing face, like that of a young Hebe, that peeped in through a small open window, which looked towards a very convenient low door in the abbey walls, that opened on the banks of the river, near the mills.

CHAPTER II.

Ful brighter was the shining of hire hewe
Than in the towr the noble yforged newe
But of hire song, it was as loud and yerne,
As any swallow sitting on a berne.
Thereto she coude skip, and make a game,
As any kid or calf following his dame.
Hire mouth was swete as braket or the meth,
Or hord of apples, laid in hay or heth,
Winsing she was, as is a joly colt,
Long as a mast and upright as a bolt.

CHAUCER.

THE little window, at which now appeared the plump, round, and rosy face of Grace Bolt, the miller's daughter, was one whose services were more than of a two-fold nature. Most glazed apertures in walls and houses, civil or ecclesiastic, are considered as merely useful for the very

simple purposes of admitting air and light. But the window in the cell of our cellarer, if fame did him no injustice, was used, and not unfrequently, for things of a very different and far more substantial nature; for nothing less than admitting goods, living or otherwise, that were very generally held as contraband to the monks. A friend, or a boon companion, was sometimes smuggled in; or a dainty in Lent; or report had gone so far as to say, now and then a damsel. In short, anything that could not pass the watch and ward of the porter's gates undetected.

Grace Bolt was a blithe merry maiden, wild as a Dartmoor colt, and pure as the flour that had been thrice sifted at her father's mills. She was a pet with the cellarer, in a harmless way. He was, as we have before intimated, a good-natured man, a dear lover of gossip, and had so much of the milk of human kindness in his disposition, that he entertained a tenderness for the female sex at large,—that delighted to expand itself in acts of kindness to pretty children, were

they little girls of eight, or blooming ones of eighteen years old. Nor was he less good-natured towards their mothers, or even their grandmothers, provided the latter would give him a seat in the chimney nook, and a cup of spiced wine, to season a gossip, and did not require of him too often the kiss of peace.

The very cockles of the cellarer's heart were moved by a sense of the purest joy at seeing a happy, frank, youthful face, shining and sparkling mouth, eyes, and cheeks, with the joyance of a gay spirit; even, as he would say, the weir of the Tavy sparkled in the sunshine. And then he liked to keep a fat pullet, or a choice store of apples, to give one to Grace, and to see her eat it, showing her white teeth, and looking roguish, as he chuckled her under the chin. And sometimes, in graver moments, as she enjoyed this dainty of the orchard, the cellarer, good man, would sermonize a little, making his subject, like the great French divines, apply to the circumstances before him. In such moments, he would

point out to her the danger of eating forbidden fruit, (always accompanying the lecture with an injunction never to trespass on my Lord Abbot's garden,) and the fatal consequences of curiosity to the mother of mankind. In illustration of which, our worthy brother would remind her there was a beauteous piece of carving in oak to be seen about the altar of St. Mary Magdalen, in the abbey church, where all the Gothic devils were represented as pampering and making much of the serpent, their great master, when going forth in this reptile guise on the deadly work of temptation.

Grace Bolt received these tokens of the cellarer's regard with all the gratitude they deserved, and she really felt for the worthy man something of that duty and affection which a child feels for an indulgent parent. She often, therefore, took occasion to slip in at the postern door in the wall, *that* being the nearest way for bringing in the bags of flour, and followed the sacks even as she was wont to do when she was a "tottering

little girl" of but four or five years old ; and she had grown up so gradually under the eye of the monks, that even the severest among them almost forgot she was now a woman, and none were shocked at a sight so familiar to them as that of Grace's rosy cheeks and smiling lips, if any one of the brothers chanced to meet her near the little window we have named. As for going beyond it, or trespassing on the abbot's private grounds, it was a thing quite out of the question, though we will not say but that Grace had a curious eye to them. She would have liked much to ramble amongst their long alleys of sycamore, and their beautiful terraces, and to see the carp play, or come and be caught, in any one of the three stew ponds that were within these precincts of the domain. Grace had in herself all those points of character in which a good-natured man most delights. There was, therefore, sympathy between herself and the cellarer ; and, moreover, the additional tie of doing kindnesses, where the one party is willing and

the other grateful ; there are few stronger bonds. In her person, Grace had more of the partridge than the weasel ; she was plump, tall, and active, had a neat ankle, and a well-turned arm, locks of curly brown, and a pair of dark eyes that shone like bugles or jet. She could not frown, for the perpetual smile on her lips would not let her ; the laughing eyes, indeed, forbade even the attempt at putting on an angry look ; if teased, she could only, like other good-humoured but petted children, shake her tiny hand, stamp with her little foot, and say a pouting word or two that did but make her look the more pretty ; so that it became a real pleasure to vex her a little sometimes, in order to forgive her, or to soothe her into a return of her sportive-ness and mirth. Even as fond mothers delight in those rainbow smiles in their infants that dimple their soft checks whilst the tears yet hang upon them.

Grace was, also, a damsel of taste ; indeed, she rather dressed beyond her degree, notwith-

standing it was a high offence in a vassal to do so. But Grace was a church vassal, and she had found the most indulgent rule from her masters the monks. The sub-prior himself had more than once given her a word out of Solomon, about the humble attire of women, and had cited the pillows of the Jewish daughters at their arms, as awful warnings against finery. On all these occasions, the modest way in which Grace took the rebukes of her vanity (a fault, however, which she did not reform,) disarmed wrath, so that the sub-prior was obliged to content himself with having given the warning, and with the recollection that the daughters of Tyre were celebrated for their vain love of dress; and that the Lady of Babylon, (understanding literally the figurative language of prophecy, and, therefore, fancying the image of an idolatrous worship to be that of a living queen,) was to come down at last, and to sit in the dust, notwithstanding her pride.

Grace's taste in dress was more for variety

than uniformity. She had, perhaps, an eye to a nosegay, where blues, greens, and reds are gaily mixed together; and certainly a tailor, or master fashioner might have culled a pattern-book from the many samples of bright colours she wore on her back. Her dress is so great a curiosity in these days, that we must say a word about it.

She wore a stammel petticoat of orchard green; a pair of new scarlet hose of sey, and half socks of Cordovan leather. Her girdle was of Coventry blue; her bodice of ginger-coloured, cendal furred with lamb's skin; cherry-coloured knots and laces fastened her kirtle in the front, and tied up her sleeves; and her fillet round the head was of nun's white, surmounted by a volupure, or veil, of Paris facture.

The cellarer, on seeing Grace's pretty face peeping in at the window, insisted she should come in and take some fruit. There was a fine dish of ripe cherries standing on the table, flanked by one of pippins. She had been accustomed

to partake of such good things ever since she used to be handed in, like a kitten or a puppy, through the window, when a child. True it is Grace had outgrown the possibility of making such entries and exits; but as, according to the vulgar saying among the Turks, (then commonly known in England by means of the crusaders,) “if Mahomet’s coffin won’t come to us, we must go to Mahomet;” even so, if Grace Bolt could no longer get in through the window, the window had been accommodated to get her in; for by some strange fancy or other, the cellarer, long before we opened this history, had caused it to be more widened in its dimensions than a strict adherence to the architecture of the period would admit, in a building of such pretensions.

Through this window Grace was now, therefore, invited to come in; and as she had for years been as friendly and familiar with the good cellarer as with her father’s great dog, Trenchard; was a rustic in education, and though per-

fectly modest, knew none of the refinements in manners even of her own day, she made, as she said, no bones about it, but accepted at once the invitation; took the helping hand that brother Thomas offered to her, gave a spring, like a fawn at its gambols under the greenwood tree, and scrambled in at the window without any difficulty; sat down immediately at the table, and sipped the cup of cowslip wine that was handed to her, in a modest way. Indeed, she quaffed it as delicately as Chaucer's prioress herself might have done; for so nice were her lips, she left not even a stain upon the cup that had been pressed to them.

“And where is thy father gone to-day, wench?” said the cellarer; “I saw him not with the villains who brought up the sacks of corn.”

“Father is gone,” answered Grace, “to seek the Lady Alicia, and to beg my lady to be so good as to give order that the new miller, who has set up at Cudlipp town, may keep to his

own bounds, and not slock away our folk to take their grist to his mill."

"The common sin and complaint of millers throughout the land," said the sacrist, "they cannot keep bounds."

"And what makes thee in that holiday guise, my lass?" said the cellarer; "this is not fair day!"

"No," replied Grace; "but there's talk of the great folk coming from Exeter; and all the town will be out to-day; and so there's to be a morris, and a jongleur, and a turgator, come all the way from over seas; and he has seen Saladin with his own eyes; and has heard the speaking stone at Jerusalem; and seen a man that tried to do it, but who could not drown himself in the Dead Sea. And he saw, also, the hermit of Lebanon, the pious hermit, that at the prayers of the nuns of St. Jean d'Acre, got up and put his own head on again, after the Saracens had cut it off! And besides all these, there's to be a wonderful doctor; a pilgrim that cures all diseases by miracle, and —"

“I see,” said the fool, “you are my most pretty Finestra, making yourself gay as the popinjay to go and see how many of my trade can be made by listening to one travelling minstrel who returns from the Holy Land. Thou wilt have to pay coin for this. Marry, wench, it will cost thee at least an esterling; for quartered money passes not current with your minstrel. Now, for my part, give me but a silver sixpence, and I will entertain the whole town for it, Holy Land fashion, and never be at fault for lack of a story, but rather for breath.”

“La!” said Grace, “what mean you by that, Master Patch?”

“Why, look you,” replied Patch, “get me an old pilgrim’s gown that hath gaping wounds in it, one only fit for the lazar; where all the tattered, the ragged, and the cuffed go to be healed after the holy wars: stick me a cockleshell here in my bonnet,—there is much in your cockleshell; give me scrip and staff with an old palm branch, stolen out of church after palm Sunday; and see

if I make not as reverend a palmer, and as good a potecary, as ever came home to cure folk by miracle from the East ; for I know how to tell lies and to ask alms for the sake of the holy places I have visited, as well as the best among them."

" You !—you would never pass for a palmer," said Grace ; " your very bells would betray you."

" My bells betray me !" said the fool, " they shall be my warrant. Know you not, daughter of a flour sack, that the Moslem is forbidden bells by his religion. I will therefore swear that I hung mine in my cap to spite the infidels, and thus will I turn my very folly into wisdom."

" How, fool, how ?" said the sacrist.

" Why, thus," answered Patch : " know ye not, that all men run on one of my errands nowadays to the Holy Land ? All go to it as fools, but many come from it as knaves. May the blessing of St. Thomas-à-Becket rest on the king's head, though his father had little comfort from his saintship whilst he lived. What hath our Richard gotten, think you, by his journey to Syria ?

Truly, trouble at home and a prison abroad. What errand hath his turned out to be but one fit for a fool? My cap and bells to him, his highness may claim them as crown dues. And then to see the fools that are made at home by these praying palmers, who traffic in physic from the East. I would work healing miracles as well as they at any pinch for a groat."

"La! master Patch," said Grace, "you could never get the trick of it."

"Never get the trick of it!" repeated Patch, "only get me the old palmer's gown, and see how I will do it. My long face shall be my wisdom. I will get me a mummer's beard for reverence; a blear eye shall pass for the redness of weeping for my sins. If I meet one who may need me, I will be in a hurry, and that shall give me the air of much occupation. Then, if my lady tells me she is very sick, I will say that I apprehended as much the last time I saw her. If she asks how long her distemper may continue, I will tell her it will depend much on what she

can afford to expend on a holy palmer's prayers. And whensoever a question is put to me that I cannot answer, I will shake my head, and that shall reply to all interrogatories."

"But if the sick you attend should die," said the sacrist, "how then would you come off?"

"Why, the man's sins are stronger than my prayers for his cure," said Patch; "and his heirs will rest satisfied with such a reason, and will never question further. Nor will they grudge the fee to the leech, so he keep not the sick long in his pains; more especially if his testament be made to their minds. To increase the calls on my attendance, my discourse shall ever be of princes, noble ladies, barons, and portly abbots, who have all been healed by my miracle-working art."

"You have never attempted to doctor your mistress, I will warrant," said the sacrist; "yet, if report speaks truth, she needs the mediciner."

"Why, look you," said Patch, "the point is a nice one; and may be, master sacrist, there are

disorders which palmers dare not meddle with, which the leech cannot cure, and which are only fit to be dealt with by men of frock and cowl, when, perhaps, in confession : but I say nothing, for what saith Solomon, a ‘prating fool shall fall.’” Patch nodded, winked, looked wise, and held his tongue, with that peculiar air which persons affect when they would intimate that they *could* tell a great deal more, well worth knowing, did they choose to tell it.

This was the very thing to excite the curiosity of the cellarer ; and, determined to come to the bottom of the mystery, he forthwith plied Patch with all manner of civil and cajoling speeches ; produced from his secret store the choicest flask of a foreign wine ; noticed the fool’s pleasant way of relating a tale ; praised his voice, which, though tolerable in the bass of a counter-point, was singularly harsh and disagreeable in a solo ; till, like the fox and the crow in the fable, he set Patch a-singing.

But as the words of a catch were not those

of the dainty morsel to satisfy curiosity that our good cellarer hungered to have dropped from the flattered lips of the fool, he gently reminded Patch that such harmonies might become audible where it was not at all desirable they should be heard, in the cells of the brothers; and after filling up another cup, seasoning it with a little more compliment, Patch's vanity in becoming the person in company to whom all the rest paid the deference of listening, got the better of the little judgment he could boast, and he became as eager to talk about, as he had before been shy of entering on, the matter. The cellarer, drew his stool closer to the speaker, not to lose a word of his discourse. The sacrist listened carelessly, but still he listened; and Grace Bolt stared with all her eyes as Patch began with the very startling question—

“ Did you never hear that by some men my lady is thought to be possessed ? ”

“ La ! ” said Grace, “ what is that ? ”

“ Possessed ! holy Mary ! ” exclaimed the cel-

larer, "how can that be, when Father Hillary hath the keeping of her soul."

"Say not of her soul, but of her conscience," said Patch, "and that the devil will trouble in spite of all the holy man's care, or I know not a hawk from a kestrel. But no matter for that," he added, putting his finger to his nose. "Possessed some folk say she is, sure enough."

"She should be brought bound to the high altar of our church, then, as they bring delirious people to be exorcised," said the sacrist; "and I ought to have my ringing and my candle fees for the same; it were a defrauding of the church else, and a neglecting a poor suffering soul."

"She ought not only to be exorcised, but to have the evil spirit taken out of her by the prayers of the monks," said the cellarer.

"She should make a waxen heart, and offer it with six candles to the blessed image of our Lady," said Grace Bolt.

"She should send a written schedule of whatever sins lay heaviest upon her mind, to have

it hid under the altar cloth of St. Rumon on Ash Wednesday," said the sacrist; "when, after sin dole paid, she would find not a sin left on the scroll; the parchment would come out from the altar as fair as her own conscience."

"Not so fast, holy men," said Patch; "why now you run before the doctor, for he neither lets blood nor drenches before he handles the pulse, and learns what may be the disease of the patient. But you ply your remedies as the Duke of Austria and the Emperor of Germany do their demands for our king's ransom, the one on the back of the other, and each with an eye to himself. You have not heard *how* my lady is possessed, and yet you slip in a way in a mighty hurry for her cure. I said she was possessed, but I said not with a devil."

"But you said the devil troubled her."

"Aye, that may be," said Patch, "but not possessed her. Why, I tell you, sir priest, she is possessed by the witch melancholy, of which there is no worse spirit, at least, to my thinking."

“Melancholy!” exclaimed the cellarer, “and she the mistress of Wilsworthy Castle, and of as goodly an estate as any Norman baron, the forfeiture of one of our greatest Saxon thanes, who was amerced by Henry, the late king, and had his castle stormed and his head broken by this noble lady’s husband, whose estate, with all its immunities, dependencies, its serfs, vassals, and villains, sack and sock, and toll and team, are even now her own;—all this, and she melancholy! I will never believe it. There never was woman so widowed, and so endowed, that held her grief past the term of her weeds.”

“Nay, for matter of that, I don’t say that she mourns for her widowhood, nor yet that she pines for a husband,” said Patch, “seeing that no man thrives who woos her, though she has had as many suitors as Queen Penelope, that are seen coming up with relics in their hands, with crosses carried before them, as our damsels worked the story in the tapestry for the chapel of our castle.”

“Then your damsels made into good Catholics a set of Pagan heathens,” said the sacrist, who had some smattering of learning. “I know the fashion of that tale. You see, Sir Ulysses was a knight, and his wife was a Lady Penelope.”

But the cellarer being much more disposed to hear Patch’s account of the Lady Alicia, stopped short his brother monk, and the fool proceeded.

“For many years past, my Lady Alicia de Beaumont hath led a strange kind of life, though being but newly returned to this neighbourhood, ’tis not much known here. There are times and seasons when there is no knowing in what mood to take her; for sometimes she is high and proud, and will admit no approach to her person. At others she is altogether gentle and sad, and will talk of St. Dunstan’s dove, and wish that it might come and settle in her bosom as it did on that saint’s head, who is said to have broke nobody’s ever after; and then her mood will change, and she will look wild

and ask who it is that is come to the castle gates, or did we meet no stranger, when, may be, nobody has crossed the threshold but a begging palmer, or the house steward and his lads."

"May be," said Grace, "she has seen something."

"Seen something!" replied Patch, "I will warrant she has; and seen something few of us would like to see,—a great deal of trouble, sorrow, and change, and very few quiet nights, and as few quiet days. For some folk do say that her husband, the late Lord de Wilsworthy and de Beaumont—"

"Was what?" cried the cellarer; "what do some men say of him?"

"I will not tell you," said Patch, reconsidering the matter; "it is enough for me to tell what I know, and not to repeat the talk of other folk. Fool I may be, but not fool enough to put my spoon into scalding porridge, and commend it to my own lips: no, no, say what you yourself know, and no harm done; but talk of

other people's tellings, and you may quickly find the cudgel on your own back that should be bestowed on that of another."

"And what hast thou known, Master Patch?" said the cellarer; "do tell us. Talking is dry work, take another cup; you shall not drink beyond the first knob; for though we are of Norman blood, in our cups we hold Saxon measure.* We hold it to be a wise rule thus, as it were, to place water-marks to our pledges of good fellowship; showing how much may suffice a man for necessity, how much for conviviality, and how much after labour; and in this we disdain not to follow the custom of the Saxon churls."

"And yet thy water-marks, holy father, as thou callest them," said Patch, "I will venture to say, were never yet consulted for a less flowing tide than that of the good red wine. In them hath been laid to rest, within this abbey, even as in the

* The Saxons had knobs fixed within their cups for measurement, answering to our quarts, pints, half-pints, &c.

Red Sea, many an evil spirit, and none that I would more willingly drown than the fiend melancholy, of whom we talked but now. And if thy water-marks be thus cheerly, thy land-marks, I trust, are no less generous. How account you of them, master cellarer?"

"A quarter of a yard of beef for every man at breakfast, saving on fast and fish days, and all in proportion. But to thy tale, good fellow, thy tale. In truth is the cup the greatest of all ramblers, for it makes both the tongue and the brains to wander far and wide. You were but now at Wilsworthy Castle, and the subject your lady—"

"Here's a health to her," said Patch. "You must know, then, that our Lady Alicia will sometimes do very strange things: she will absent herself for days together from her household, and nobody knows whither she goes; some say on penances so secret and so severe, that no mortal eye must look on them. Others say she has a vow, and not a few that she has

a familiar ; but *that* I will never believe, for nobody keeps a spirit for their *own* torment, though often to torment others ; and whatever spirit our Lady Alicia may consult, it is one that never brings a smile on her own face, as I can witness. She was bad enough in Normandy, but worse since she has returned to merry England.”

“ She should get her a good husband, a blithe bachelor, some knight of renown, or lord of high degree, or even squire of low degree. To live alone is never well for maid or widow, unless she be vowed as a spouse of holy church,” said the cellarer, crossing himself.

“ It cannot be that which grieves her,” replied Patch ; “ for the sovereign king having the right of wardship, by the laws of the Norman William, over all widows of rank, as well as noble orphans, with the power to make their marriages, and to compel them to wedlock within a certain time, our Lady Alicia, not liking to be so compelled, paid no less a sum than a thousand pounds,

tower weight, to Henry, our late king, that she might not be forced to marry till such time as it might please her own fancy to do so."

"And did the king grant her suit?"

"Ay, that he did," said Patch; "and nothing loth was Henry to do so, and to clutch the gold; for it was at the time he had his war of railing tongues, and hot disputes, and banings, and excommunications with Thomas-à-Becket; and there was nothing to be done at Rome with the Pope and the cardinals, to lull the storm, without money; and so gold was as welcome to the royal treasury at that time as grist is to thy father's mill, Grace," added the speaker, as he looked at the pretty wondering face of the miller's maid.

"And if report tells truth," observed the sacrist, "the present king, his highness King Richard, was not sorry to have a like sum from the Lady Alicia, in another matter of wardship,—I mean that concerning the younger lady, the blooming Adela de Marmoutier, for such, I

think, is the Norman damsel's name. How went that matter?"

"Marry, thus," answered Patch. "'The Lady Alicia had an only brother, a Norman baron of great estate; and after her husband had perished in the Holy Land, she found much comfort in his affection. Well, this noble baron died also, as a noble baron should do, in battle; and thus was my poor lady bereft both of husband and brother, with no earthly creature kindred to her in blood, excepting a little child, her niece, the orphan daughter of her deceased brother, and sole heiress to all his castles and lands. To take charge of this infant girl, my lady passed over seas into Normandy, but could not settle matters about her till she came back again to England."

"And there was some dispute, we heard," said the sacrist, "between her and our King Richard concerning the wardship of the child. Was it not so?"

"There was such a dispute about it," said

Patch, "that nothing but the king's necessity, and my lady's gold could settle it. Gold and necessity are two arbitrators in a quarrel, that soon kiss and make peace, and so the Lady Alicia paid his highness as much for the wardship of the Lady Adela, as she had before paid to his royal father to secure her own liberty for widowhood or marriage: a thousand marks were told down, and she forthwith stept into the king's place, and became lawful guardian to her own orphan niece. This done she once more passed over seas into Normandy, took possession of the castle of Marmoutier in the name of her ward, lived there for awhile, then travelled on holy pilgrimages to many a distant shrine, and has at length returned to England with her young charge, who is now a woman grown."

"Wisely has she done," said the cellarer, "for Philippe of France, many men think, hath a shrewd eye on Normandy, now that the princely Richard lies like a caged lion in his cell. Philippe, it is thought, will stir a war there, for the

mastery of the land. The Lady Alicia and her fair ward are safer far in England at such a time."

The discourse had arrived at this point, when it was very suddenly disturbed by a slip of a boy, one of the scholars of the abbey school, who acted as a sort of page to the cellarer. This lad was alert and shrewd, one who delighted to assist in any matter that transgressed the rules of the house, for the pure pleasure of doing so, and of exercising that degree of adroitness and wit that is necessary to prevent detection, or to frame an excuse when unavoidably detected. The boy was very useful to the cellarer, and had found his account in being so, especially in the fruit season, or when any sports were going on in the neighbourhood or the town.

He was always prying about, and, from some hidden nook, had seen Grace Bolt slip in at the cellarer's window. Knowing how much her presence within the abbey walls was contrary to rule, he now came to give notice, in order, that

the coast might be cleared ; as he had just seen, from one of the towers, *a progress*, as it was called, moving along the Oakhampton road, towards the good town of Tavistock. By a banner and the cross being carried before the chief rider, with the black cloaks and white scapularies of the rest, the lad was sure the progress must be a body of churchmen.

“A banner and a cross, carried before the chief rider ! It must be the archdeacon, then,” exclaimed the cellarer ; “what doth he here ? — our monastery is exempt ! Up, my lass, up, never mind the pippins ; our lad, here, shall run down with a basket of them presently to the mill,—up, and out of the window with you,—the archdeacon is not a man to play with. He hath not the absent mind of our Lord Abbot, who heeds not trifles that occur around him, when he is busied in his own concerns. Neither has he the consideration of the prior, nor the good-nature of the sub-prior. The archdeacon is as the eye of the bishop, and though he be but one man, and

therefore may his lordship, in respect to him, be said to be one-eyed, yet this one eye of his hath a piercing vision,—therefore up and away with you. And *you*, Master Patch, had best not linger. Though *you* might have excuse,—you bear a message from your mistress, or a dozen of tapers or so from the noble Lady Alicia to St. Rumon's shrine."

"I bear candle ends for my lady, I!" said Patch indignantly. "I would have you to know such offices are performed by the varlets of our house, and not by me who wear no silver collar. I am a free man, and am neither serf nor thrall, and moreover this is not Candlemas for the setting up of lights. I shall out at the great gates, even as I came in at them; and if I meet the arch-deacon, I may chance to tell him, that there are more fools than one who come on errands to the abbey, as he may find to his cost, if he have any matter to debate with Abbot Baldwin. But mum for that, I will even depart."

"Do so," said the cellarer, "and now I be-

think me, 'tis best you should go forth by the great gates ; but you, Grace, you must once more out of the window." And without further speech the good man assisted her, and she was soon on the outside of his apartment. He stayed but to charge her to slip away by the postern door ere it should be locked, and not to say to any one where she had been.

Having given these directions, the cellarer closed the window, hurried off Patch, and, with the assistance of the sacrist, cleared the tables of cups and flagons ; washed his face, to cool the heat of rather a copious refreshment, and went forth to seek the sub-prior, to confer with him on some matters of import, before the arrival of the archdeacon.

CHAPTER III.

A clerk ther was of Oxenforde also,
That unto logicke hadde long ago.

* * * * *

But all be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
But all that he might of his frendes hente,
On bokes and on learning he it spente,
And besily gan for the soules praie,
Of them, that gave him wherewith to scolaie,
Of studie toke he moste cure and hede,
Not a word spake he more than was nede,
And that was said in form and reverence,
And short, and quicke, and ful of high sentence,
Sonning in moral vertue was his speech,
And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

CHAUCER.

ABBOT BALDWIN, the superior of our monastery, was of Norman blood. Though he shared to the fullest extent the pride and spirit of

oppression with which the victorious Normans harassed the unhappy Saxons and their aggrieved descendants, yet, with more prudence than most of his countrymen had displayed, he forbore to express his scorn of the vanquished by those outward demonstrations of contempt which are so offensive to a conquered people, still smarting under the yoke ; and still, with the bitterness of unavailing regret, cherishing the recollection of the privileges they had lost by the overthrow of their fathers in their own land.

Thus, though invested with arbitrary power from the high station he held in the west, Abbot Baldwin was, in a great measure, acceptable both to Norman and Saxon ; for if the latter remembered he was of the blood of their detested conquerors, they also recollected how different he was in his conduct towards themselves, to the tyrannical feudal barons, who frequently treated them with far less consideration than they bestowed on their hounds ; bought and sold them with their lands, scourged, imprisoned, or hanged them as

slaves and criminals, on the slightest suggestions of their interest, passion, or caprice.

Abbot Baldwin had also another strong hold on the goodwill of the Saxons. The school denominated *Saxon*, originally instituted by Orgar, the founder of the abbey, and suppressed in consequence of the havoc made by the Danes, who burnt the sacred edifice soon after its foundation, had been revived by Abbot Baldwin; he had even restored to it its ancient name,—*the Saxon School*. Had the abbot given the fallen Thanes, the Ceorls, the Socmen, and even those of a far humbler grade, gold or precious stones to console them for their poverty and degradation, he would not have gratified them so much as he did by this simple act of restoring to them their school, at so ancient and important a place as the abbey of Tavistock.

The truth is, that Baldwin was a learned man; and feeling desirous to preserve in all its purity the Saxon tongue, (which was more a curious

than a copious language,) to prevent its being utterly lost and confounded with the jargon of Norman French, then beginning to mingle itself with the ancient Saxon in common conversation, he determined to revive the school for the youth of the conquered people, where no tongues but the Latin and the pure Saxon were to be taught, though the various sciences of the period were to be admitted without restraint. The revival of such an institution was most welcome to the public; and even Norman youths were not refused instruction, provided, like the less favoured race, they would strictly conform to the rules as well as the learning of the school. From this cause Abbot Baldwin became as popular with the Saxons, and, indeed, with all parties, as any abbot could be, who, born in Normandy, had been transferred to England, and was there put over so large a body of men, and so many thousand acres, with all the live stock, both human and bestial upon it, at a period when

slavery, with its attendant hardships and injustice, was a part and parcel of the laws of the land.

In his person, Abbot Baldwin was tall and well formed, and had that grace about him inherent to men who are cast in Nature's finest mould; so that education seems to have little to do with it; for those whose limbs are of such exact proportion in themselves, can scarcely be said to move in an ungainly manner, though they are strangers to the arts of discipline in the training of the human frame.

The abbot had numbered nearly sixty years, but as he had never known hardship nor sickness, and was far from being one who deemed person of too little consequence to require attention, he had bestowed so much care upon the preservation of his own, that he looked, as very handsome men always do, when past the middle age, many years younger than he really was. His features were regular, and of a noble cast, his forehead high, with a pair of as bright

and piercing eyes as ever shot their glances from beneath cowl or hood. And we may here be permitted to remark, that the hood, when worn so as to throw a shade over the upper part of the head, gives to it that air of grandeur and awe which the partially revealed and partially concealed never fails to create, a thing so poetical in personal beauty, and that produces such a wondrous effect in a head like Abbot Baldwin's, characterised as it was by intellect and expression. His mouth was finely and delicately formed; such as we very commonly see in persons of high birth and the most refined education.

Though our abbot was stately in his attire when he rode forth, or went into society on occasions of ceremony, yet his dress in common was simple; being only distinguished from the rest of the brothers by its finer material, and by the precious rosary of gold and amber that depended from his girdle. A crucifix, also, of like metal was suspended from a gold chain about his neck. For the rest, his scapular, an

upper garment worn beneath the black tunic, was of fine white cloth ; and over the tunic, (that was girt round the middle with a leathern belt,) he wore a mantle of black samite ; to which was attached a cowl long and peaked : this, at the pleasure of the wearer could be drawn over the head and about the face, or be cast back upon the shoulders, so as to leave bare the shaven crown, with its fringe of short hair suffered to grow round the head, just above the ears, like a wreath or chaplet. Though the abbot was privileged to wear a cap lined with fur, Baldwin seldom did so within doors ; and by the humility of his general attire, it would seem as if he only adopted one of a more costly nature, when he deemed it necessary to the ceremonial of his high office. Common eyes measure the dignity of the individual by the awe inspired by his presence ; and common men feel respect for the office in proportion to the power which they fancy is indicated by the wealth and splendour of the official.

At the time we introduce Baldwin to our reader, he was seated in an apartment of the abbey that was not liable to intrusion ; it was called the abbot's hall. The ceiling and panelling were of oak ; the rafters of the former were black with age and smoke ; for the huge stone chimney that stood at the lower end of the hall, sent, in every high wind, more than half its smoke with the eddies that roared down its tunnel, into the room.

On the panelling towards the upper end of this apartment hung a long and narrow piece of tapestry, the work of the nuns of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall ; of whose house the sister of our abbot was the prioress. This tapestry represented in worsted on cloth, the acts of sundry Cornish saints of eminence ; and more especially those of St. Michael. The principal subject was the saints' contest with the devil for the body of Moses. In it the archangel appeared in chain mail, with the cross on his shield like a crusader. And in order to paint, as they

thought, the devil a little blacker than he was usually deemed to be, the godly sisters who executed the work had given him, as well as their simple skill could represent it, the physiognomy of a jew; the foul fiend's long beard, gaberdine, and yellow cap, being all characteristic of that despised and unhappy race.

In this hall there was likewise a window of great beauty; it terminated the room opposite the dais. It was magnificent though somewhat gloomy, and shed its subdued light upon the pavement of glazed tiles in streams of variegated colours. This, called the St. George's window, was the gift of a Ferrers, a knight banneret, who had been a very great benefactor to the abbey, and had not confined his donations to the church alone.

The window represented the acts of the warlike saint and patron of England. Amongst these were some with which modern times are less familiar than they are with the story of his killing the dragon by thrusting his lance down

the monster's throat. Even that celebrated combat was not represented in the manner in which we may now not unfrequently behold it, whilst swinging on a sign post before the door of a house open to the public for good cheer. No, in the window in question St. George was made to slay his dragon in the land of Egypt, whilst a king and a queen were seen looking on from the top of a pyramid, their virgin daughter, at a distance, chained to a pillar, and attended by her little dog. This inscription appeared beneath,

Hic mactat draconem.

In another compartment the saint had his head cut off by a foe, and very nicely put on again by the Virgin Mary. These words were beneath,

Hic beata Maria resuscitat eum a tumulo.

But a window of such warlike records, more suited to the chamber of a military monk or knight templar than to the hall of an abbot of Benedictines, was not the only indication of

a warlike spirit within precincts apparently so devoted to seclusion and peace. Several suits of armour, some helmets and morions, with many an arbaleste or cross-bow, and many a cloth-yard arrow and barbed missile, with bill and hook, hung in the abbot's hall; indicating that weapons were not wanting to put into the hands of his yeomen, pricklers, bordarii, serfs, and villains, if any sudden alarm might call on the monastery to arm. Indeed Tavistock Abbey had never been unmindful of its defence since it was so suddenly surprised and burnt by the Danes.

There was also in this chamber a few early hard gothic paintings on panelling, principally consisting of rude attempts at the portraits of the founders of the abbey. Orgar, in the odour of sanctity, at the gate of heaven, presenting to St. Peter the abbey church of Tavistock, which he held in his hand, as he kneeled to the Apostle, who, on the sight of it, opens to him the gates of bliss; whilst a whole row of cherubim are

singing, piping, harping, fiddling, and ringing the hand bells, to welcome him to heaven.

The picture which Abbot Baldwin presented in his own person, as he sat in the hall we have described, would have been a fine one for Rembrandt, had Rembrandt been then living to secure it upon canvass. It was a picture calculated to touch the imagination. There, within the shade of the gorgeous window, and beneath a carved canopy of oak, where the arches and stone pillars supported a roof of gothic gloom, sat, in the silence of monastic meditation, Abbot Baldwin. His manly figure was striking, though shrouded in the garments of a black monk. His cowl thrown back, as his head leaned on his hand and the arm rested on that of his chair. The expression of his face was severe, thoughtful, but majestic. The brow was in repose, the muscles of the mouth relaxed, the eye fixed, but not on outward objects; for at that moment Baldwin had neither sight nor attention but

for the things within his own deep, thinking, and energetic mind.

Did we continue to look upon the scene with the eye of a painter, we should say it was finely finished by a second figure, that, soon after we opened this chapter, entered upon it and completed its most picturesque effect.—Baldwin, striking with a wooden hammer on the table before him, (which hammer he used as we now do a bell, to call a domestic,) the summons was answered by a youth about seventeen years old, who was of a most manly aspect.

His limbs though slight were muscular; and the dress he wore, that of a Saxon boy, seemed well calculated to show to advantage his tall and handsome person. He was attired in a tunic of red woollen cloth, which descended to the knees, and had long close sleeves. The throat was bare. The tunic was bound round the waist by a girdle, or, as it was called in the Saxon, a *rooc*, beautifully embroidered with a running pattern of flowers and birds in silks of divers

colours. His *brech* or *hosen* scarcely reached the knee, and on his legs he had the *scin hosen*, or stockings formed of leather; over these a *socca*, consisting of bandages of red cloth, that united to a stout leathern sole, crossed the foot and legs up to the knees in the same way as to this day, we see Highlanders wear red-crossed stockings; a fashion concerning which we hesitate not to venture the opinion that it is nothing less than a remnant of this ancient *Socca*, or *Scancberg* of the Saxons.

Over his shoulders the youth wore a short mantle, like the Roman Pallium, that fastened at the shoulders by a *fulæ* or brooch of wrought silver. On his wrists he had bracelets of carved ivory and silver; a collar of the same description was about his throat, and from it depended a *Bulla* or amulet, or charmed gem, (a piece of superstition long retained by his people,) that was formed of an engraved amethyst. It bore upon it the head of St. Luke. The charm in the present instance was worn to keep off leprosy.

a disease then gaining ground in Europe, having been originally brought into its several countries from the East by the Crusaders, who frequently brought home nothing else from the holy wars. The dress, which from its curiosity, as well as its antiquity, we have here described at full to the reader, was long retained by the Saxons, who, even in their outward attire, were very long before they would adopt the fashions of the Normans. It was the common habit of civilians amongst that people, more or less costly, according to the material of which it was composed, and the ornaments and jewels by which it was enriched.

The wearer of the garments we have noticed, was a Saxon youth of more than ordinary pretensions; but not in fortune, for he was poor, the fatherless son of a degraded thane, degraded because that thane had taken part in some matter of a public nature against the Norman rulers of the land. But Cædmon the fatherless (for so was this youth called), had merit of a personal kind more than sufficient to counterbalance the

hardships of his fortune. He had distinguished himself so much at the Saxon school, in the sciences as well as in the languages there taught, that he was a favourite with the Lord Abbot, who, delighting in the handsome appearance of those about him, allowed Cædmon the rich habit we have described, and promoted him not only to the honour of wielding a pen, of writing and illuminating manuscripts in the Scriptorium, but to that of being his own principal secretary, minstrel, and page: and we must here remark, that in all the great monasteries of the period, the sons of the noblest born among the novices or scholars were usually selected as pages of the abbot.

In his person Cædmon was graceful. His countenance open, frank, and manly. His complexion retained its natural fairness, for as he had been closely kept to the pursuits of the scholar, he had not shared much in those exercises common to the youth of his time, though he dearly loved the sports of the field whenever he

could on any rare occasion be permitted to indulge in them. Cædmon had the large blue eye and the light yellow hair for which the Saxons were so celebrated; and that eye could become brilliant and sparkling in moments of strong emotion; and when circumstances connected with the affections called forth the finer feelings of his heart, its expression was no less animated than tender.

“Benedicite,” said the abbot, as Cædmon, bowing reverently, stood before him with a respectful air, holding in his hands a bundle of newly written parchments. “Optatus advenis,” continued the abbot. “Quid libellorum est in manibus?”

“Lectionem in linguam vernaculam translaturus sum,” replied Cædmon.

“Ego te in ingenii palæstram et arenam inducam,” said the abbot.

“Nullum ego tribunal recuso,” answered Cædmon, modestly, but without hesitation; and the abbot accordingly proceeded to put to this

his favourite boy of the school, sundry questions respecting the studies and scholarship of the class; with which some of our readers, notwithstanding the universal education of these days, would be very little edified, did we follow it up in the monkish Latin dialogue in which the discussion was carried on; now and then mixed with the *Lingua Franca* of the period, and even with good old Saxon, a tongue with which our Abbot was well acquainted.

During the twelfth century the subtleties of the Aristotelian logic were a most favourite study. But the Abbot of Tavistock, like John of Salisbury and Alan de Lisle, liked not that abuse of the cultivation of the reasoning powers which had become a perfect mania in many of the then existing schools. Indeed sophistry and quibbling had risen to such a height, that as the clergy were in those days the clerks or lawyers of the country, the present ingenious gentlemen of the wig and gown, and the more dangerous part of the profession, (in a few instances, the

very sparrow-hawks of it,) the attorneys, may lay claim to the canon lawyers of the twelfth century as the fathers, grandfathers, and originators of the nicest arts of subtlety and evasion : those arts which by quibbling, by going the roundabout way through all the labyrinth of cross pleas, like cross roads, appeals, writs of error, &c. &c., may, by good management, keep a client in an excellent march and counter march in pursuit of justice, instead of bringing him point-blank to the mark, and at once settling the matter. That witty Spaniard was no fool who said that many a lawyer defends his client as seamen do their ship in a storm, throwing overboard all they have, that, if it be God's will, they may be brought into port — empty.

To return to our abbot.

“ And what hath Radulphus the logician, taught in the schools to-day, Cædmon ? ” he continued ; “ somewhat more, I trow, of that close and abstruse method, to which I am no friend.”

“The subject of to-day’s inquiry, most holy father,” replied Cædmon; “proposed by Radulphus for discussion, was on the substantial form of sounds. There was a very hot debate between him and Father Albertus on this matter; that Albertus, I mean, who is come to teach the singing novices counter point in the song school.”

“And how like you, Cædmon, the subtleties of these teachers?”

“Oh! how cold do all such studies appear to me, when compared to the divine arts of poetry and music!” replied the Saxon youth; “it is when I sing to my harp the poetry that has been inspired in my thoughts by the sight of nature, that I can forget all the griefs of this world: then do I seem to soar above them on a spirit’s wing.”

“To become a good poet thyself, Cædmon,” said the abbot, “thou shouldest study the works of the best poets. Hast thou seen the Antioches of Joseph of Exeter? a poem wherein he makes the Croisade the subject. It will be an

admirable exercise for thee, to render it into the Saxon tongue; though we like the Latinity of Joseph better than we do his hero, our King Richard."

"I have seen it, my lord," answered Cædmon; "but to my thinking, it lacks the essence of true poetry in those parts wherein Joseph describes the face of nature. Had he wandered over our hills as I have done, as the early day rises slowly from his bed of fleecy clouds, whilst our brightening rivers lift up their many voices, and the lark sings her shrill song, as chanticleer sounds the bugle note of morning to the cotter's ear, and calls him from his slumbers to labour in the field;—had the poet of Exeter studied these things in themselves, he would have better known how to sing of their delights. For my own part, I never look on the face of nature, at the morning or the evening hour, but my soul is on fire to sing her praise." Cædmon's eye dilated and flashed, as, with spirits raised to en-

thusiasm by youth and the love of song, he thus gave utterance to his feeling.

The abbot saw this, and said in a tone of friendly admonition, — “ My son, forget not in this ardent love for the gentle craft of the minstrel, that poetry is but as the gems or ornaments of human knowledge; whilst solid learning and moral philosophy are as her garments for summer and winter use, no less serviceable in the genial days of prosperity, than comfortable and sustaining in those of adversity. Cultivate ethics, therefore, my son, second only in excellence to the study of the canon law, and that of obedience to the church, which is obedience to God, for we may never forget — *Veritas à quocunque dicitur, à Deo est.*”

The abbot was here interrupted in his discourse with his favourite, by the blast of a horn. Thrice it rang through the old walls of the monastery.

“ Go to the tower at the end of the dortor,”

said the abbot, addressing Cædmon, “the tower which overlooks the great gates, and tell me who it is that comes. That horn had a blast with it that might be heard to the very summit of the hills.”

Cædmon obeyed and soon returned.

“It is the archdeacon and his train who come, may it please you, my lord,” said the Saxon. “He bears the banner of the bishop, my lord of Exeter.”

“Ha !” exclaimed the abbot, “from Exeter, and to our house ! We hold our monastery exempt. What can make this man so bold to come hither with his state ? Had he come to our poor abbey on his own account, he should have been welcome ; but we admit not the authority of the diocesan here, and, therefore, we will not yield to it. Cædmon, dost thou know this man ?”

“No, my lord, I know him only by repute, but men speak fairly of him, and say he is one who investigates to discover honesty, truth, and

justice. He is the very eye of the bishop, who receives from him all the light he gathers respecting the monasteries of his diocese in the west."

"It shall not serve him to look into our concerns, Cædmon," said the abbot. "You say you do not know him. I will teach you, then, what he is;—a wily subtle Norman, one who took part with the late king against Thomas-à-Becket, a supporter of the constitutions of Clarendon—which that primate opposed—giving up to laymen the power of administering the laws in the punishment of offences committed by the clergy. Such a yielding of the spiritual to the temporal power was not to be endured, for the honour or the independence of the church. Becket suffered exile, misery, strife,—yea, death! rather than yield the point; and here stands one, though of the church's humblest servants, who would be as bold,—one who, if he may not emulate Becket in greater things, would, at least, follow in his steps in the courage to

suffer as he suffered, to die as he died, for the independence of his office and of his monastery. By the holy bones of St. Thomas, I feel my spirit mount to a yet stronger resolution, when I do but name his martyrdom. Cædmon !”

“ My lord.”

“ We will meet this archdeacon ; we will entertain him with all courtesy, but we will confer with him in no place save the chapter. We will have no private tutoring here, no proposals for our ear in the locutory, with another manner of argument for us in the assembly of our brethren.”

“ You will not meet the archdeacon then, holy father, till you do so in the chapter ?” said Cædmon.

“ I said not so,” replied the abbot ; “ he shall have all hospitable greeting ; our house must not be wanting in its duty to a wayfarer ; but we will have no private conference with this man, this Alberic the Norman, once of the

Abbey of Le Bec. Well do we know him,—a very subtle man, of whom it may be said, as Sallust said of Catiline, *cujuslibet rei simulator atque dissimulator*, we will not trust him. He the bishop's eye ! he a searcher after truth ! why, I tell thee, Cædmon, he is but as the tool of men in power—a very cameleon ; for whatever colour the bishop may take, that doth he become on the instant. Every Bishop of Exeter is with him the perfection of man and churchman ; and the last ever the best.”

“ Will you, my lord, be pleased to feast him in the guest chamber or in the refectory ? I must give notice of your pleasure to the cellarer.”

“ Oh ! in the refectory,” replied the abbot. “ Our investigator after rule shall see that we keep rule. And hark thee, Cædmon, who lectures to-day at the refecton ? ”

“ I do, my lord.”

“ Well, then, do thou give us that piece, Cædmon, which thou hast penned for the history

of our abbey, taken from our records, the foundation of our house by Orgar : the archdeacon shall see we lack not scholars here. And, hark thee, charge the cellarer to be punctual in the performance of his duty on ourself ; we will not abate an atom of our privileges. Let him suffer no one to sit till we are seated ; let him give but half a sextary of wine to any brother who asks for beverage at dinner ; and bid the cup-bearers be ready to attend on their abbot at the table : we may not slight ceremony towards our person as superior of this house, at a time when there are those who would pass on us an authority that we deny. Go, therefore, Cædmon, look diligently after these matters, and bid the vestiarius attend upon us in our chamber. We will change these mean garments for robes of more state. Yet, Cædmon, these are but outward things ; we should robe ourself rather in the mantle of righteousness and of simplicity, and trust the rest to Heaven, for all these indignities may but be aimed at us for our

spiritual good, since they are but among those changes and variations of fortune that wean holy men from the world. Yet this archdeacon,—it were good for his soul's sake to humble his pride ! He visit here to look after our abbey !—our rule ! —but I will be patient.”

Having thus vented his spleen against the unfortunate archdeacon, Abbot Baldwin went to prepare for his reception, which he intended to make as tedious by ceremonies as he could possibly render it. In the mean time we must retrograde a little, and state some matters which occurred at the abbey just before the archdeacon reached its gates.

CHAPTER IV. .

The garden was by measuring
 Right even and square in compassing,
 It was as long as it was large,
 Of fruit had every tree his charge.
 There were, and that wote I full well,
 Of pomegranettes a full great dele.

* * * * *

These trees were set, that I devise,
 One from another in assise
 Five fadome or sixe, I trowe so,
 But they were high, and great also,
 And for to keepen out well the sunne,
 The croppes were so thicke irunne,
 That every braunche in other knitte,
 And full of green leaves sitte,
 That sunne might there none deseend,
 Lest the tender grasses shend.

The Romaunt of the Rose.

TRUST not two things, says the old proverb,
 a calm sea and a woman's curiosity. We appre-

hend that, good girl as Grace Bolt really was, it would have been more prudent in the cellarer, when he dismissed her, instead of receiving her assurances only to leave the abbey by the postern door, had he fairly seen her off the premises himself; for it so chanced that, not very far from the postern in question, by following the path under the wall, a private way was to be found that led direct into my Lord Abbot's garden.

Grace had not been in it since she was a little child, when the late abbot would sometimes take her there himself, and, leading her by the hand, would walk up and down one of the shady alleys of the holly and the sycamore, and would listen to her prattle.

What now possessed her, and under circumstances so pressing, to think of peeping into the garden, we cannot say, since we are not sufficiently masters of the philosophy of the human mind to be able to account for all the freaks that will often excite the fancy and overrule the will of a pretty, petted, and spoilt

girl of eighteen. Perhaps the idea of visiting the spot was at this moment simply suggested to her by seeing the little private door that led to it standing most invitingly open, and no one within sight. The garden being more especially the abbot's, the cellarer had never allowed her to trespass within its bounds since she had become old enough to fall under the clause of prohibited goods at the monastery. And ever since she was forbidden she felt the strongest wish to see the place. Yet, recollecting the cellarer's admonition on the subject, it was not without a struggle between her curiosity and her conscience, (something like that between Master Launcelot and his internal monitor, when he meditated showing a clean pair of heels to the Jew, and running away from old Shylock to a new master,) that Grace now resolved to satisfy at once her idle fancy by entering the forbidden ground.

No sooner had she done so, and passed within its first bounds, than she kept close in the long

walk, under the abbey walls, for greater security. The walk was thickly set, on the wall side, with a clothing of ivy, and on the other, by a tall row of sycamores, planted very nigh to each other. This long avenue, for such it was, extended as far as the last of the stew ponds that lay at the end of the wall. By peeping through the holes of the trees, Grace saw the gay flower-beds, the terraces, the fruits, the gothic pleasure house, and all the delights of my Lord Abbot's garden, and more especially was she struck with the grand appearance of the old stone cross that stood in the very centre, and the pond and the old willow, drooping its branches into the waters about which she had heard tell the wildest tale of superstition.

On these, and many more such things did Grace now look with eager and wondering eyes. She would have liked very well to have helped herself to a little fruit, for though the cellarer was bountiful to her in this respect, there is always something indescribably sweet to the young in

picking for themselves. But she would not venture out of the shade of the trees, for fear of being seen from the monastery windows. At length, satisfied with gazing, she thought of making her retreat, when a pretty little bird that flew down from its nest among the ivy, attracted her eye. It was a robin—a robin, that most bold of birds, most fighting, as well as most familiar. It came so near Grace, now with its stiff and straight legs hopping on before her, then just rising and flitting aside to a bush or bough, then again brushing its wing on the ground, and still on the flutter, and still seeming to invite her onward, that she, girl-like, followed too far, in the hope to see where the nest might be. But ere she could discover the retreat of this pretty pecksy in search of his flapsy, what was her dismay in perceiving through the boles of the trees, the sub-prior, Sir Simon, the curate of the parish, and the cellarer himself coming towards the long walk in which she had hoped to be concealed. She stayed to see no more,

but with the foot of a fawn ran in all haste to the postern. But what again was her consternation on finding the door locked ! She knew not where to go, till, recollecting she had observed the door of the still house to be open, (the still house was a tower situated in the boundary wall by the Tavy side *without*, and flanked *within* by the long walk of the garden,) she resolved there to seek shelter, in the forlorn hope that she might not be detected. She reached it in safety, ascended at once the outside steps, and got into the upper apartment, a place very seldom visited excepting by the monks, who there distilled their medicines and sweet waters before breakfast, for every Benedictine abbey had a school for medicine within its walls. In this apartment there were two narrow windows ; Grace went to that which overlooked the river in the direction towards the old stone bridge.

The miller's maid peeped cautiously through the lattice, where her eyes were speedily gratified with a sight that all the town, men, women,

and children, seemed to be running out to witness, — the progress of the archdeacon. It was evident that he was engaged on some mission from the bishop, as he came in state. She saw the whole procession, but she liked it not so well as the sights she had seen at the octaves of Easter, at the fairs, and rustic sports of May day.

First came a knight and two esquires, each armed and mounted, and followed by six archers in their short tunics and steel caps, for there were too many bands of outlaws and thieves at this period in England to make the roads safe for a journey of any distance without a guard. Then came a mounted priest bearing a banner, on which was embroidered a mitre, and beneath a crosier crossed by a key of gold. After the banner bearer, came another ecclesiastic, also mounted, and carrying aloft a cross. Then followed the archdeacon himself, well hooded and furred, and seated on a palfrey, whose housings were plain and without embroidery, for he was

a man of no pomp in his equipage, beyond what might be absolutely necessary for the occasion on which he moved. He was attended by his chaplains and train, each man being attired in a black frock and white scapulary, and each having his head well protected with a thick furred hood. The progress was closed by six more archers and a waggon, for there being no good monastery on the road between Exeter and Tavistock, the archdeacon had travelled with all necessaries and comforts about him. He had also a couple of pack horses and a sumpter mule ; the former carried his mail trunks, and the latter the especial services of plate for his table, his breviaries, his chalices, and his priest's cope. On the top of the sumpter mule, agreeably to the singular fashion of the time, sat an ape, dressed in scarlet and silver. All the animals of burthen had their heads gaily set off with ribands and silver bells, and a stout mastiff was tethered to the back part of the waggon by a long chain, so that he kept a post of very useful watch

and guard over the viands and the comforts of the party.

Having seen the procession clear the bridge, Grace knew that in ten minutes it would be passing within the monastery's gates. Not doubting, therefore, the holy men she had espied in the garden were by this time gone forth to meet it, she once more ventured from her hiding-place, her intent being to steal round the house and endeavour to gain speech with one of the scholars, to whom she knew she could with safety impart her trespass, and from whom she might seek aid for her deliverance. But in this plan she was also thwarted. No sooner had she reached the last of the tower steps, than she again caught sight of the three individuals who had before so much alarmed her. There was no time for consideration, for they were coming towards the very spot where she stood; only the boughs of a large old tree that drooped over her head, at this moment concealed her. As her last chance, she now, therefore, slipped into

the lower or ground floor of the still house, and hid herself behind its half open door.

But cross purposes, like misfortunes, never come alone. How it happened we cannot exactly tell; yet true it is, just as the sub-prior was answering some remark of Sir Simon the curate, they all three walked up to the still house.

“Never tell me,” quoth the sub-prior; “of the archdeacon coming to look after the keeping of rule within our house, by order of the bishop. Why there is no house of Benedictines within the realm, where stricter order is taken with all within its walls. Canonical rule never forgotten; Lauds, Prime and Tierce always sung. Not a fast neglected, no capons and fat swans allowed in Lent. No leaving an empty refectory that the brothers may regale, contrary to rule, in their own cells. No want of rods and disciplines, as the precentor can witness, who makes his regular supply of the new, as the boys make a bonfire of the old, the week before Ash Wednesday. No want of hair shirts here:

no babbling at compline. After that hour, our silence, Sir Simon, is so absolute, that it would be difficult to say if some of our brethren were dozing or meditating on holy things: and, then, for the sanctity of the brotherhood, they will not even endanger their eyes, far less their thoughts. We admit no temptations here; shun them. Fly the devil is our rule; and so, not so much as even the petticoat of a woman is admitted within our walls; save by my Lord Abbot, who sees ladies of estate in the locutory; or poor old women at the alms gate or in the cloisters. In good sooth, Sir Simon, my Lord Abbot holds all the sex safest at a distance, be the age of the individual what it may. So that he encourages not the old women to come too often to the Maundy, when he washes the feet of the poor on holy Thursday, in the church porch. The gossips, however, like not the restriction; for, truth to tell, they felt their pride mightily gratified in the late abbot Walter's time, (good man, peace be to his soul!) by having

such a personage to wash their feet ; and so 'twas their custom not to suffer them to be touched for many a week before the Maundy, but to reserve their perfect ablution for my Lord Abbot's own hands."

This was the longest speech the sub-prior had ever made, but he was warm in defence of his abbey ; and though Sir Simon essayed to speak he would not let him, but summed up all, like an advocate, in these words, by way of peroration. "No, no, Sir Curate, we admit no women here, for did we find one within these walls, knowing she could never come where there is such discipline, unless it were by gramery, and for evil intents, we should immediately seize upon her, scourge her for a wanton, make her stand in a white sheet for a harlot, and, may be, burn her for a witch."

Grace Bolt, who stood behind the half-opened door, trembling, fearing, panting like a hunted hare, on hearing these threats proceed from the mouth of the sub-prior, and knowing that in another instant she should be detected, in her

panic rushed from the tower, threw herself on her knees at the feet of the cellarer, and begged brother Thomas for our Lady's sake, to save her, to bear witness to her innocence, that she was no harlot, no witch, that she might not be burnt alive ; and, speaking as well as she could between her sobs, that she had only slipt in at the window of his cell, by his own invitation, on that blessed morning, and entirely to please him. Here Grace stopped in her voluntary confession, not for want of matter, but for want of breath.

How shall we describe the scene that followed ? The astonishment of the sub-prior, the rage of the curate, (for Grace Bolt was one of his parish and of his own flock,) and the utter surprise and dismay of the cellarer. For a few moments, all carried on a discourse of looks, wonder being the predominant feeling with each ; but this could not last. Had there been no one present but the sub-prior, the cellarer would not have cared a rush for the matter, in being thus caught. For had the sub-prior thought proper to be a

little angry on the occasion, he must soon have been reconciled to the cellarer, on the same excellent principle that makes Peachem and Lockitt friends in the Beggar's Opera; namely, because one could hang the other, did it come to a matter of detection. But the curate of the parish, Sir Simon, was present, and that altogether altered the nature of the case.

Sir Simon, like most of his brothers among the secular clergy, looked with a jealous eye, from out his poor manse, on the comforts and enjoyments of the monks in their more costly abbey; and delighted to have a hole to pick in their coats, and to detect any one of their frailties, in order that he might chuckle over it, as he sat at laymens' boards, and did, what a single man could do, to fight a thousand, for in number the monks of Tavistock Abbey were no less strong. To have *him* present, therefore, to witness this shame, was not to be thought of by the worthy sub-prior with any degree of patience; and yet, not wishing to run the risk

of offending and irritating the feelings of the cellarer, he felt that he had a very nice part to play at such a crisis. He paused a moment, therefore, to consider how to proceed. But not a little was the sub-prior's embarrassment increased, when he looked on the curate, and beheld the strange commotion that seemed to war within his breast.

Sir Simon's large goggle eyes appeared to flame up with passion, like a couple of torches or lighted brands ; his lips quivered, his chest heaved, he pressed his teeth together as if to keep in the rage that was ready to fly out, like the hot steam of a boiling caldron. At length he stammered forth in a voice sharpened to the keenest pitch of bitterness, — " You Thomas the cellarer, you have drawn astray one of my flock ; you have been the wolf to steal into my fold ; you have robbed me of my choicest lamb ; you have outraged all my feelings, that is, I mean, my feelings for holy mother Church ; for I am here in right of her cure, and all the souls and bodies

in the parish are given to me. And to me shall you answer for one lamb that is led astray. The bishop himself shall hear of this; I will prefer my complaint against you to the archdeacon; I will make you stand to your account; will you or nill you, you shall answer it."

"I am answerable to none, but my Lord Abbot," said the cellarer stoutly; "and I have done no ill. Speak! Grace, speak, what harm has come to you for being in my cell this morning; what did I give you when you came there?"

"Cherries and apples," sobbed out Grace Bolt, not daring to move from her kneeling position.

"Apples!" echoed Sir Simon; "apples! Holy Mary protect us! the very temptation of Eve, the very wile of the serpent! To tempt a silly girl like that, with apples! and then to cry, no harm done! How do I know but that they may have been the apples of the dead sea, which some of our reckless Crusaders bring from the East; fair outside, full of rottenness within. She may by eating them have sold herself to the devil,

for aught I know ; and then how am I to answer for the lost sheep of my fold ? ”

“ Brother, brother,” said the sub-prior, in a conciliatory voice, “ let me pray you not to make a brawl of this matter ; for though you, Sir Simon, are secular and we conventual, yet are we both men of holy church ; therefore would I counsel peace, forbearance, and brotherly love.”

“ There hath been too much of it, I fear, for a sister,” said Sir Simon, with a sneer ; “ I marvel you so excuse him.”

“ I excuse him not,” replied the sub-prior ; “ mistake me not, good Sir Simon, I only pity him : truly apprehending that all this may after all arise from a snare of the enemy. We know how potent he can be. He may have whispered to our brother here, that apples were innocent things. We do not say they are so ; Holy St. Bennet forbid that we should call that innocent which lost our first parents Paradise. But the cellarer hath done her no wrong.”

“ I know not that,” said Sir Simon. “ To

entice her thither, I hold to be as foul an act as was the sin of King David, when he laid a snare for the undoing of Queen Bathsheba, as he looked upon her from the housetop."

The cellarer held up his hands in wonder, as well he might, at the hearing of such a charge.

"Nay, Sir Simon, nay," said the sub-prior, "there you go too far. Such a charge cannot be made within reason. Not that we would altogether excuse Thomas the cellarer, though we do in some measure excuse him, always supposing he has acted under the delusion of the enemy; therefore I, being sub-prior, and not choosing to trouble the Lord Abbot in this matter, I do herewith enjoin a penance on him for the breaking of rule, which shall be sufficient for his repentance and amendment. Brother Thomas, I recommend you to sing this day before you sleep, the seven penitential psalms; and furthermore to humble your human pride, which may have had some influence over your will to induce this lapse of rule, possibly whispering to

you that you were comely and portly in the sight of this silly wench,—to humble, I say, your human pride, I recommend you, also, as an act of degradation in penance, to assist this very day in the hospitaler—to assist by there receiving the newly arrived guests, and by drawing off their boots and socks, to ease them after their journey, and putting on their feet the talcaparia, or old shoes. And should any further or voluntary motion of penance occur to your own mind, you can, good brother, call in at the confessional, after compline, and confer with me respecting the same.”

A sly glance of grave good-humour which accompanied these last words, intimated to the cellarer how much of this speech was made to save appearances, and how much to exact obedience. Grace Bolt being twitted by brother Thomas for speaking before she was spoken to, and, by so doing, making a great coil about a little matter; receiving, also, a moderate scolding from the sub-prior for the present, and the promise of

one far more severe by and by from Sir Simon himself, was finally dismissed, and hurried off as privately as could be, not only from the garden of my Lord Abbot, but from the abbey's bounds to its outmost wall.

CHAPTER V.

Love it is an hateful peace
A free acquittance without release,
And through the fret full of falseheed,
A sikernesse all set in drede
In herte is a despairing hope,
And full of hope, it is wanhope.

* * *

For none is of so mokell prise,
Ne no man founden so wise,
Ne none so high of parage,
Ne no man found of witte so sage,
No man so hardie ne so wight,
Ne no man of so mokell might,
None so fulfilled of bountie,
That he with love may daunted be ;
All the world holdeth this say,
Love maketh all to gone misway.

Romaunt of the Rose.

WHEN Sir Simon, the curate, quitted the monastery, he was too much heated with the

fumes of anger and jealousy to be capable of cool reflection. The offence, therefore, of the cellarer, in respect to Grace Bolt, appeared before his imagination in the most false and exaggerated colours. But thinking the detection of the girl herself gave him an advantage over her hitherto obdurate spirit, which he had long desired to possess, he determined not to lose the occasion, but to go forthwith to the dwelling of Grace, in the somewhat singular and contradictory characters of an amorous suitor, and an offended pastor to the strayed but still precious lamb of his flock.

Now let not the reader be shocked at this assertion, for Sir Simon meant no harm to Grace ; for “all he did, he did in honour,” with a little policy to boot the more readily to help the work. The truth is, he had long looked towards her with an eye of affection, and purposed making her his own in an honest way, by making her his wife.

In order to explain this to our readers, we must first tell them, that so long did the English *secular clergy* continue to marry, it was not till

some years after the date of our narrative that their doing it was altogether, as a crying sin, rooted out of the land.

In the early part of the twelfth century, during the archbishopric of Anselm, the severest canons had been made in the councils of Westminster against the marriage of the clergy. But these were so indifferently observed, that others of a yet more severe nature were enacted, whereby all priests were enjoined to put away their wives, and never after to see or speak with them, except on occasions of great necessity, in the presence of two or more witnesses. These laws, however, being found insufficient to prevent the supposed offence, the Church turned her fury principally against the women, as the weaker party concerned in the crime, and therefore the more easily to be subdued: consequently, any woman who should be induced to commit the offence of marrying a secular priest became subject to punishment, the same as an adulteress; no difference was made, no mitigation. But feelings of natural affection

were stronger than all the canons instituted for their suppression ; and so much did the clergy continue to marry, that at last the Church, despairing by her own authority to prevent the evil, insisted on the king's putting in force the laws against it. The monarch, however, who was expected to enforce these severe penalties, (Henry the Second,) was, perhaps, too conscious of his own frailties in respect to the weaker sex, to feel much interest in the matter of their chastisement. And not liking, may be, to be too hard upon those whom God had joined together in matrimony, if holy or unholy, and at the same time not altogether wishing to be at cross purposes with the Church, he went exactly half way between both parties ; and thinking that a good sum paid down, as we now pay an impost on forbidden goods, would satisfy canonical justice, and put the loves of husbands to the test, (as all priests were at liberty to put away their wives if they did not choose to pay for them,) he contented himself with laying a round sum on the head of

every ecclesiastic who had a wife ; a tax which instantly made her, in the literal sense of the word, a very dear thing. And as Richard of the lion heart, the successor of Henry, by every possible exaction extorted from and oppressed his subjects, to supply his necessities for the holy wars, he privately winked at the custom ; so that any priest, in his time, who could pay on what was called inquisition, a good sum into the exchequer of amercements and fines, was allowed to keep his spouse without fear of molestation ; and at no other rate of annoyance than that of being twitted by a stricter secular than himself, envied by the monks, and looked down upon with scorn by those self-satisfied persons who were righteous over much, and who severely condemned all sins and affections for which they had in themselves not the slightest inclination ; a race of censurers quite as rife in the nineteenth as in the twelfth century.

We deemed it right to say thus much in regard to the marriages of the secular clergy,

in justice to Sir Simon, that his reputation might be cleared from all suspicion, and that he might stand forth in the eyes of our reader, even as he did in his own, as a most worthy and meritorious suitor of Grace Bolt of the mill, being instigated to undertake his suit by that most powerful of all passions — love. Love, which, like a fire, shows neither sense nor respect in its rage, seeing it sends forth its flames hither and thither, enters the palaces of kings and nobles, and the cottages of villagers and serfs, without distinction, and when once bent on a destructive course, consumes where it had once only comforted and cherished, and never stops in its career till pride is laid low in the dust; and will, when seemingly extinct, frequently send up a flame from its ashes, and even then will linger amongst the very destruction and ruin it has made.

Such is love with many; but with our Sir Simon it was, just at the time we introduce him to our reader, far more like a flambeau or

a torch, that, flamed high, making a dazzling and glaring rather than a pleasant and a steady light, sending out streams of black smoke, and casting its sparks in every direction. In truth, Sir Simon was not merely up to the ears in love, but from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he was all over in it,—he had tumbled into it, for he neither saw, moved, thought, nor spoke, but Grace Bolt was before his eyes, in his path, in his mind, or on his tongue. With what pretensions to success, in respect to his own person and attractions, let our readers decide from the following sketch of him.

At a time when the clergy were by far the most educated class of the community, when many of them were really learned as men, and accomplished as gentlemen, Sir Simon was, if brought into contact with such of his cloth, very like a wild man that had been caught in the woods amongst the bands of outlaws and half savage persons who then infested England. He was altogether unacquainted with the customs

of the higher orders of society in his day; so that the Abbot of Tavistock, and many others, looked upon him as a churl, entitled to a certain degree of toleration only on account of his cloth. He was, it was said, of true Danish breed, with the blood of a great Saxon grandfather intermixed; yet he deemed himself pure Norman, because it was the fashion of the time so to be, or so to appear.

Sir Simon had a head of hair fiery red; a little nose that looked as if only half-formed by nature, when she had been disturbed whilst originally squeezing it into shape; a large mouth, and, though full and goggled, deep sunk eyes, overshadowed by a pair of shaggy eyebrows. These peculiarities of feature altogether presented a countenance so singular, so strange, and so wild, that many on first sight of it did not know if it were most calculated to make them laugh or to make them fear. This face, so oddly put together, in one of nature's freaks, could, in moments of irritation, become even convulsed with

passion, like an animal of the feline tribe spitting and hissing in its rage. It looked in such moments like a wild cat of the mountains, more than anything else; as to compare it to a tiger would be by far too dignified a comparison.

Yet for all this, the face of Sir Simon could smile and look tender upon Grace Bolt; and he was proud to display before her, what, as a country lass, he fancied she liked best to see, — how strong he was, and that he could have broken the heads of all the cudgel players in the ring with ease, had he not been a priest. The motion of his legs and arms was ungainly, and when he presented his hand in salutation, it was with a twist of his whole body, just as a lion or tiger, when tamed into civility, would present his paw. And as nature seldom works by halves, to a form that was so herculean in limb, muscle, and brawn, she had added a voice not unworthy being found in combination with proportions of such strength and power; for when he opened his mouth to perform mass in his church, it was like the rumbling of

thunder; and his sermons were not only calculated to awaken a sinner, but even to waken the deaf or the dead.

With parts and qualifications, personal and otherwise, such as we have described, it was not to be supposed Sir Simon could be so unthankful as not to be sensible of their merits. Indeed, so far was he, good man, from being dissatisfied with his abilities, that he rather, than otherwise, overestimated them. For he thought there was no person in all the wide world like himself, so richly gifted by nature, so favoured by heaven, and so sensible of its favours, that he was quite sure, happen what would in any matter, he never could be in the wrong. Sir Simon was none of your poor spirited fellows, who could not say *bo* to a goose; for on a proper occasion he had impudence enough to have faced the dark enemy himself, had he dared to come up from his own realms to question with him in person. Not even St. Dunstan could have been bolder when he took the devil by the nose. Sir Simon was none of your

doubters neither,—men who halt between two opinions,—for he listened to nobody's but his own; and his temper was naturally so sweet, that he was always in excellent humour when he had all his own way, and all went well to please him. And so far from yielding was he from weakness or modesty, or a mistrust of his own reason, he was on all occasions of opposition as blind as passion could make him; and very malicious where he thought there was nothing to fear; whilst, as for forgiveness of injuries, real or supposed, he never had the presumption to think himself saint enough for any such act; and so, from a pure spirit of humility, if once offended he never did forgive.

Such was altogether the very excellent person who, out of pure love to Grace Bolt, had made up his mind to put up with all the scoffs and scorns of the more rigid among both laity and clergy, and to pay the tax into the bargain for becoming a married priest. He had settled the whole thing in his own mind, and some how

or other he never doubted hers. Yet, as for Grace, though she could frolic with her playmates the village lads and lasses on the green, and dearly loved the cellarer, who had petted her ever since she was a child, she thought no more of Sir Simon than she did of my Lord Abbot; but respected him as being the priest of her parish, and that was all. She would often sit and wonder in respectful silence, as he talked what she could not understand, which he frequently did, when he would call in at her father's mill, take a cup of ale, and enjoy a gossip; for Sir Simon at all times opened his ears to one as widely as any old woman in the parish could do.

But as love is never deficient in imagination, it did so happen that Sir Simon was not wanting in this particular; and moreover not being at all mistrustful of his own powers to please, he had most ingeniously construed the silence of Grace into an understood consent to his addresses, and never doubted (as she now and then would stare with her full round eyes upon him, when lost

in wonder at the more abstruse parts of his conversation,) but that on all such occasions, she was riveted in admiration of his most rare and eloquent discourse. Not till within the last two or three days, when he called repeatedly at the mill, did it ever enter into his besotted head to doubt his visits were other than agreeable. But somehow or other, self satisfied and self deceived as he was, he did, nevertheless, remark that in these latter visits, when he spoke some soft things in her ear, Grace turned away from him with a cross and pettish air, and looked as if she did not like it.

These indications of gathering clouds in that atmosphere of love with which the curate's imagination had surrounded his fair one, puzzled his shallow wits ; he could by no means account for them ; since, having satisfied himself he *ought* to be beloved, he did not doubt but that he was so. When, therefore, the incidents of the day at the abbey came to light, the cellarer's attention in the temptation of the apples, the stroll

into the abbot's garden, &c., Sir Simon could no longer hesitate, no longer forbear suspecting that, notwithstanding the great difference of their ages, and his being vowed to monastic rule, the cellarer had become his rival, and that Grace was as fickle as she was fair.

To satisfy all doubt, however, he determined to seek his charmer ; but some provoking circumstance or other had intervened all the day long, so that he could not find himself at liberty to execute his purpose till after curfew. In fact, it was so late that the miller had gone to bed, and so had the miller's knave ;* and Grace was about to betake herself to rest, when she heard a growling from the watch-dog, stationed in the small court before the mill. She knew the gates were locked, and that, as a wall of some height surrounded the premises, no one could enter. She therefore never troubled herself about the matter, but took the brass bodkin out of her hair, shook her long

* The word *knave* is here used in its ancient signification that of a servant.

unbound tresses over her shoulders, and proceeded to pass a comb through them, ere she made any further preparations for going to rest.

Meanwhile the unfortunate Sir Simon, like a vessel of modern construction that is impelled forward by the steam which arises from her boilers within, hurried on, scarcely feeling the ground beneath his feet, till he arrived at the well known gates of the abbey mills; forgetful alike of the hour, and of the curfew bell that had long since tolled; forgetful of the darkness and the difficulties of the way, and seeing only by the flambeau of jealousy, that cast its own unnatural glare on every object on which he looked, giving a colouring of its own to all things within and without his impassioned mind. In this bewilderment Sir Simon never once thought of the gates being shut, till, fancying they would yield, as usual, to a slight push of his hand, he nearly knocked his nose against them, in the effort to pass on.

This circumstance made him feel that they

were locked; but what are locked gates to that power which is proverbially said to laugh at locks and the smiths who made them? “Very poor is the love,” thought Sir Simon, “that cannot get over a wall.” And, in this tempest of the passions, thought and action being with him one and the same thing, up he sprang, and with the activity of a marmoset scrambling after a nut, gained the top of the wall, and slid down on the other side, never heeding the slight accident of leaving a part of his gown behind him, nor that of the rent he made in his hose, a part of male attire which, in the days of which we write, included more than the stockings.

In the courtyard there was no one at hand but the great dog, and the great dog growled. Sir Simon, emboldened by his rage, never heeded the animal, and was about to give him a kick, but, recollecting that the creature might set up a bark and disturb the neighbourhood if he did so, he chose rather the method of conciliation; and so, making himself known to his four-footed

acquaintance by familiarly calling him by his name, to which the dog's nicety of recognition gave no denial, the trusty guard very complacently wagged his tail, remained perfectly quiet, and let Sir Simon pass on undisturbed.

Grace had carelessly left the door on the latch, and, as her father was a vassal of the Lord Abbot, she frequently broke the law about the curfew with impunity, for she had even now, after the legal hour, kept a light burning within the dwelling at the mills; so that, when Sir Simon walked in without ceremony, she could at a glance discern the discomposure of his dress, his face, and his eyes staring wider than they ever stared before; he looked wild, disordered, almost beside himself with the mingled emotions of jealousy and love. On seeing Grace, Sir Simon exclaimed,

“ Oh, Grace ! what have you done with me ? ”

“ What have I done with you ? ” re-echoed the astonished maid of the mill, shaking back her hair and parting it from before her face with both hands. “ Oh, Sir Simon ! what have you

done with yourself? You, a priest, to be coming here at this time of the night!—I will call up father.”

“I do not want to see your father; it is you, Grace, who must hear me, or I’m a dead man before the morning. I can’t bear what I feel here,” he continued, putting his hand on his heart. The miller’s daughter thought he spoke of his stomach, and, being of a kind and charitable disposition, she very good-naturedly offered him a cup of carraway waters, as her father’s remedy against the colic. “Carraway waters to me, Grace Bolt!” exclaimed the unhappy Sir Simon, “to me! and I in the agonies of love,—agonies that none but yourself can relieve. You have dealt with me cruelly, you have, you false, deceitful woman;” and then, adding a trope, like one from his own sermons on idolatry, he said, “you have cast down the virgin image of the purest love from its shrine, and have there raised a wanton image instead for your idolatry.”

Grace, quite incapable of comprehending such a flight of nonsense as this, (in which Sir Simon had, as he believed, made a figurative application of his own pure love, and opposed it as metaphorically by the fancied dishonourable passion of the cellarer,) but hearing, as she did, the words *virgin image* and *shrine*, and something about casting them down, she very naturally concluded that she was accused by Sir Simon of the sin of an *Iconoclast*, (though she would not have comprehended it by that hard name,) and so, wringing her hands and blessing herself, at the hearing of so false a charge, she called on all the saints above to bear her witness that she never did such a wickedness in all her life ; that she never saw an image of the holy Virgin without kneeling to it, nor a picture of her without kissing it ; and regularly set up two candles before her altar on her own day, ever since she was a little child ; and furthermore, she told him that she scorned his false words, and would appeal to the Lord Abbot, whose vassal she was, to protect her.

Sir Simon now accused himself of talking to the wench in a way she could not understand, and of wasting his tropes and figures on such ignorant ears, though they belonged to the pretty head of Grace Bolt; but so angered was she, that it was long ere he could make her comprehend his meaning. At length he succeeded, and once more pleaded his love with all the ardour of the passion. He told her he would make her his wife, and that he meant to pay the tax for her dear sake.

“ But I don’t want you to pay it,” said Grace, very bluntly; “ you are not to my mind; I had rather see the back than the face of thee, any day, at our mill.”

“ This to me, young wench! to me, your lawful pastor!” said Sir Simon with a haughty air, for her bluntness and scorn had roused in him a sense of offended pride, and now spoke the superior, the lover giving place for a moment to the priest. “ Do you know, Grace,” he continued with a solemn air, “ do you know what are the

judgments of Heaven against those who treat its ministers with contempt or scorn? Do you know, young damsel, that miracles are called up to punish those who commit such offences? You may, for this contempt of me, be awfully visited, even as the young men and maidens who scoffed at Robert the Saxon, so famous for his prayers. They put scorn on the holy man, by disturbing him with their dancing and singing whilst he was at his orisons; whereupon he straightway prayed to our Lady and St. Magnus that the offenders might continue dancing and singing during a whole year, and so they did."

"What! without stopping?" said the wondering and alarmed miller's maid.

"Ay, without stopping," replied Sir Simon; "and it was a piteous sight to see how they could not even be suffered to stand still to tie up a garter, or to slip on a shoe, if it got down at heel in the dance: one of the young men took his sister by the hand to whirl her round at the cutting of a caper, and immediately her arm

dropped off; and so she danced out her whole year, with nothing left but the stump !”

“ Alack ! ” exclaimed Grace, as she opened her eyes, mouth, and ears, in wonder, at the hearing of such a miracle as this was. And now beginning to fear that she had gone too far in offending a priest, she hung down her head, and tried to cry ; but she could not manage it. For not feeling respect enough for Sir Simon to be able to force out a tear of repentance, she *made wise to do so*, as the good folk say in Devonshire, when they mean to intimate that they are playing off a little deceit, and she now very demurely wiped her eyes with the corner of her volupure.

Sir Simon, seeing her contrition, thought he had produced the desired effect, and that he had done enough for his own dignity. So wishing to blend awe and love together, as the most likely means of governing the female heart, he once more became tender, and tried to soften the flinty bosom of the maid of the mill. Long did he plead, but to all his impassioned ex-

pressions did she remain silent, looking down with shamefacedness, and playing with the corner of her volupure, as a modern and fashionable beauty would with the end of her scarf, when listening to a declaration of love to which her heart has no inclination, but for which her self-interest has something to plead.

At length Sir Simon got on to protesting what he would and would not do for her sweet sake, would she but listen to him. He would get half the parish to send their corn to be ground at her father's mills. He would give her a new blue court-pie, guarded with silver, as fine as that of the reeve's daughter. She should hear minstrels and turgetors, as if she were a baron's lady; she should see the apes and the dancing dogs, just come from France, that Queen Berengaria herself had seen and laughed at till the tears ran out of both her eyes for mirth; she should hear the harp and the crota, and even dance round the may-pole, as she did when a girl.

To all these tempting, and not very canonical,

offers, Grace turned a deaf ear. Sir Simon then proceeded to tell her, he would go a love pilgrimage for her dear sake ; and we may here observe that love pilgrimages were at their very acme in the twelfth century. “ Oh, Grace ! ” he continued, “ there are few things but I could submit to them for thy dear love, so I might but win it in the end. I could whip myself every night under thy window, as if thou wert a very saint before whose image I did penance for a sin. And is it not sin to love thee as I do ? my idol—my dearest—my ladybird—my mouse ! ” As Sir Simon pronounced this last pet name of endearment, in the very tenderest manner, he ventured to seize on one of Grace’s fair hands and to squeeze it, which procured for him a most cat-like completion of his compliment, for Grace, as if by accident, but really by design, as she snatched her hand away, scratched the back of his very sharply with her long nails.

Sir Simon reddened as he felt the smart, but Cupid’s was even yet more severe ; and so he thus went on :—“ Oh, Grace ! you have become

to me like my patron saint, more than my lady love. I have burnt tapers and said masses for the success of my suit ; and have taken you up as my one idea. I see and hear you in everything. In the very bells that summon me to my duty, I seem to hear but the clapper of thy father's mill. If I look on a white fleecy cloud, as it sails above in the sky, I think straight upon thee, as I have seen thee among the flour-sacks, whitened all over with their dust. All other women seem but as bran in comparison with thee. Now Grace, dost thou understand me? How I love thee, my very pearl of miller's daughters, the wassail bread, as I may say, in a banquet of delights."

Here Sir Simon was again getting poetical. He stopped, however, in the midst of his flight, and once more came down to homely prose, saying very roundly, "Grace Bolt, can you love me?"

To so direct a question, the maid of the mill gave as direct an answer, and that was, "No."

“Not love me, Grace !” exclaimed Sir Simon, in amazement, “how can that be ? May be, you have not seen sufficient of me yet.”

“I have seen thee at father’s mill every day since Candlemas last,” she replied ; “and if that is not seeing enough of thee, tell me what is.”

“Yes, Grace, but thy father, or thy old grandmother, or thy aunt have been present, and such company has been an impediment to the endearment of lovers ; what talk could pass between us in their company ? Now, if you would but consent to let me sit by your side, or walk alone with you every day, for a few hours, Grace, you cannot think how much you would love me at the end of the year.”

“Not a whit more than I do now,” she replied ; “and may be I should hate you for teasing me so.”

“Hate me ! impossible,” cried Sir Simon ; “nobody could ever yet hate me. On the contrary, from the very dogs and cats in the

house up to the old women in it, everybody loves me, — a man of my eloquence, of my character and calling; whilst to young creatures like yourself, I am as sweet milk or fresh butter. You would love me were I daily in your company alone. Philosophy has long since settled it, that love comes by proximity. 'Grace Bolt, I see you do not understand me, by the way in which you stare; I will explain in a more plain phrase. Do you see yonder those two joint stools? Well, Grace, even so as they now stand fixed side by side, they could not so remain, for any length of time, without loving each other in the end; always supposing joint stools could be capable of the passion of love. Even so should you and I love were we always together."

Somewhat out of breath, or out of wit, Sir Simon here paused in his discourse. But oh! what was his wrath when, instead of being moved to pity by his figures of speech, Grace, unable any longer to keep her countenance, was so amused at

the illustration of the joint stools, that she burst into a fit of laughter, so obstreperous as to cause her to show her white teeth, and to hold her very sides in this overflow of her mirth.

With Sir Simon, however, it was no laughing matter; or if he laughed for a moment, it was like an hyena that laughs before he flies at a pretty playful gazelle, which bounds across his path. He tried to speak collectedly, but his sentences were short, and broken with the bitterness of his passion. His countenance became fierce, his eyes wild, and he almost grinned in his fury, as he said, — “Insolent woman, you shall rue this! — I can hate as well as love; and may be, a little better. Hearken to me: I suspect you and the cellarer, — suspect you both; there are laws for such offenders. There are appeals to be made, informations to be given, judgments to be passed, and punishments to be inflicted — ”

“The cellarer is as honest a man as ever breathed,” said Grace Bolt, boldly.

“Curse him !” cried Sir Simon, in his jealous passion, forgetting he was a priest ; “name him not to me ; for if you do, if you say but a word in his favour, you are a lost woman, though my own soul went to purgatory for the deed. You do not know what I can do : I can be dangerous, and that you may find to your cost.”

Grace would have spoken to mitigate his fury, but he would not let her.

“I will not suffer you to condemn yourself,” he said ; I will give you time to consider of this matter. I love you, fool that I am to stoop so much beneath me. I love in spite of myself, love you with a fire in my breast that not the torments of limbo itself can surpass in its flames. Thou must—thou shalt be mine ; shalt have pity on me. I will give thee till eight o’clock to-morrow morning to think on my proposal : then, Grace, declare thyself, and then are we friends or foes, and for ever. To love or to hate, do thou choose. If thou wilt love me, I will adore ; if thou wilt hate, I will revenge.”

So saying, without staying to hear a word in reply, with a violence of manner and of gesture which indicated frenzy, did Sir Simon quit the miller's maid, and left her to settle her resolution as she best could with her own stout heart.

CHAPTER VI.

You are meek, and humble mouth'd ;
You sign your place and calling, in full seeming,
With meekness and humility : but your heart
Is cramm'd with arrogancy, spleen, and pride.
You have, by fortune, and his highness' favours,
Gone slightly o'er low steps ; and now are mounted
Where powers are your retainers ; and your words,
Domestics to you, serve your will, as 't please
Yourself pronounce their office ; I must tell you,
You tender more your person's honour than
Your high profession spiritual.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE chapter-house of Tavistock Abbey, of a more recent date than many other parts of the edifice, was circular within ; of a light, lofty, and graceful style of architecture, which, together with the pointed arch, was first introduced into England at the time of the Crusades. There were in this chapter thirty-six stalls, wrought

of stone, within the walls, over-arched and decorated with the richest carvings. In the centre arose one slender reeded pillar, which, branching from the top, into regular arches, formed a vaulted roof of the greatest beauty. In form and elegance this tall and shafted column, with its sprouting branches above, might be compared to the palm-tree of the East, — the palm so uniform, yet so graceful in its uniformity, that it may not inaptly be designated as the architectural among trees.

The windows of the chapter were in the pointed style, very narrow, and filled with small diamond squares of plain glass, that admitted unobstructed the light of day. But these colder portions were surrounded by a border of rich stained glass, and on the top of each window appeared, in the same glowing materials, the arms of the patrons and benefactors of the house.

It was in this beautiful apartment that Abbot Baldwin, on the morning after his arrival, prepared to meet the archdeacon, in the full ceremonial

of his order. The abbot was attired in his alb, robe, and cope, with gloves richly jewelled on the back of the hands; his ring of espousal to the church on his finger; his cross of precious stones depending from his neck, and his low and peculiarly formed mitre on his brows.*

With great dignity of aspect and demeanour, did Abbot Baldwin now advance to take his seat. He was preceded by his cross-bearer, and a chaplain, who bore, likewise, his crosier before him. The crosier was in the ancient form; it resembled a warrior's mace. The train of his robe was borne by Cædmon, the Saxon page. His arms were crossed upon his breast, his head rather raised; and as all the brothers assembled arose at his presence, he acknowledged their courtesy by

* All abbots wore the kind of mitre here described; it differed from that of a bishop, or *mitred abbot*; the latter being allowed to sit in the parliament amongst the peers spiritual. As the Abbot of Tavistock did not receive a grant to take his seat amongst these till the reign of Henry the Eighth, Abbot Baldwin could only wear the common mitre.

slightly bowing till he reached the steps of an elevated stall, which stood alone on the eastern side of the circle, facing the entrance.

After a moment's pause, he again bowed and took his seat. Then all present followed his example ; and the prior and sub-prior both advanced, knelt, and kissed their superior's hand ; this homage paid, they returned to their seats ; and the abbot said, with solemnity, " The souls of all deceased brethren and of all believers rest in peace." To which the monks in chapter responded, " Amen."

" Benedicite," continued the Abbot ; " and now let us to the business of the day."

No sooner were these forms ended, than, at a given signal, the doors of the chapter were again opened, and the archdeacon and his train were seen standing without. There was a bustle, a stir, something like a contest. The abbot soon perceived that his own cross-bearer, who had retreated after conducting his superior to his stall, was among the throng, and was, in fact, the indi-

vidual principally engaged in a warm debate with the cross-bearer of the archdeacon, who now attempted to enter the chapter with the same ceremonial as had before been observed on the entrance of the abbot. The words, "Not here,—not to be suffered here," were heard above all the murmurs of the voices in the crowd. "Not here. My Lord Abbot is in chapter. None may advance into his presence with a cross borne before him, whilst he sits here in council, in his own monastery, unless he be a cardinal who comes with the authority of his holiness the Pope."

"It is my Lord of Exeter, who visits in the person of his archdeacon," said the cross-bearer of the latter, as, with a fierce look, he attempted to pass forward, in no very gracious manner. "Know your duty, and give way to the power of the bishop."

"No such power passes here," said the officer of the abbot, and lowering his cross, and using it like a halbert, he barred the entrance in a way so as to render the passage of his rival impossible.

“ You come not here with the raised cross of Exeter ; this abbey is exempt.”

The dispute was likely to be warm between the officials. Abbot Baldwin kept his seat whilst it was carried on with the most unmoved demeanour, till the archdeacon, seeing no possible means of making his entry but by violently dislodging the opposing cross-bearer from the station he had assumed, (where, if the truth must be told, he held his sacred emblem as a bar to the way, with as little respect as, in our days, the keeper of a turnpike would bar the road with the gate closed, till a dispute about the toll might be settled,) he bade his own cross-bearer stand back. On this the other instantly raised his symbol of abbatical authority, and let the proxy of the bishop pass forward, followed only by his train of chaplains and clerks.

“ My Lord Abbot,” he said, as he addressed Baldwin with a look of defiance and a bow of respect, “ this is not well. Did I come hither as Alberic, sometime a simple monk of Abbey

Le Bec, — did I approach as such into your presence, barefooted, with a discipline in one hand and the penitential rule in the other, and so crawled to your feet to beg a benison, it would not be too humble for me in my own person. But, mean though I may be in myself, not so am I in my office. I come hither, Abbot Baldwin, in the name of my Lord Bishop of Exeter, your diocesan, to whom you owe obedience ; I come on a visitation respecting the rule of that house over which you bear sway. In showing disrespect to me in this mission, you show it to my Lord of Exeter ; and to him, therefore, will I make my appeal.”

“ We hold ourself and our house exempt from his authority,” said Baldwin ; “ but inasmuch as it respects our own honour that we should receive with all courtesy whatever matter my Lord of Exeter would propound to us, we will not deny you the audience you require. Speak freely, reverend archdeacon : we will hear the bishop in your person as a suitor, though

not as a master ; and therefore is it that his lordship's cross could not, in this chapter, be borne before his archdeacon."

"Proud Abbot," said Alberic, "this assumption will not pass. Your house is not exempt ; it is amenable to the power of the bishop, and that it is so you may be made sensible of to your shame hereafter. There are many grievous charges that my lord hath against you, of which I here present you the written schedule in this scroll. You are accused, as abbot, with having your own private seal, with which you have signed away certain lands appertaining to this abbey, for your own profit, and to the grievous injury of the house."

"It is a false charge," answered Baldwin ; "I have not so done. I did but sign away a part and parcel of land that the old Lord De Dunsford coveted, as it adjoined his own. I made it over to him for the wisest purpose, that it should return to the abbey with a tenfold interest, even with the estate to which it thus

became annexed, at its owner's death. A wise thrift was such a gift, I trow ; else had the old Lord De Dunsford's nephew claimed the estate as his heritage, and so it would have been lost to the church ; for the young man cares not for cowl nor mass. He would not give a mark to have a mass said or a bell rung for a dead uncle's soul. But now will the old Lord De Dunsford enjoy our small parcel of ground whilst he lives, have the benefit of our prayers when he is dead, and we of all his lands. What other charge have you against us ? for we would fain have the scroll unfolded to its utmost limits," added the speaker in a tone of scorn.

" My Lord of Exeter charges you with having taken upon you to interfere in affairs of an episcopal nature. You have granted sundry licences for wedlock within prohibited degrees of kindred ; as in a case of marriage between cousins of the sixth remove. You have enjoined a public penance on the wife of a secular priest ; a matter clearly beyond your power. And you have also

taken upon you to grant letters of indulgence for the erection of certain chapels and cells within the diocese, without warrant of my Lord Bishop."

"To charges such as these," said the abbot, "I have but one answer. The times are not those of such easy manage, that we may let them run their own accustomed course, and either do, or delay to do till the exact forms and ceremonies of every matter may be observed. These are times of extreme necessities, and such must be met by extreme measures, often above rule, though not contrary to it. Is it contrary to rule that when a house like ours is called upon to furnish such store of arms, of steeds, and sums in gold, for these wars in the East, that rather than oppress our poor vassals to raise them, we make the rich furnish them, by sale of licences and indulgences granted at their own suit, for which they pay nobly? And shall we not put to open shame a woman who has become the wife of a secular priest! because it is shrewdly suspected that the Lord Bishop of Exeter is

disposed to view such offences with too great lenity, and therefore lets go by the offenders? We will suffer no such practices within the bounds of our own domain."

"But you suffer some that are worse," said the archdeacon. "I came to your town but yester even, and this morning have I received information of a charge most solemnly preferred against one of your own house, for conduct that I should blush to name. The secular priest here, Sir Simon, the curate, charges one Thomas, a monk and cellarer of this abbey, with having, contrary to rule, and at the suggestion of the great enemy of mankind, admitted to private conference, and that, too, within his own cell, a woman, the daughter of your own miller! The sub-prior, Sir Simon also accuses of being a party to the transaction, having full knowledge of the fact."

The abbot looked round with astonishment. "How!" said he to the sub-prior, "what charge is this? Send for the cellarer; call him hither.

This matter is one which it becomes our authority to correct. In good sooth it were a scandal to our abbey to let such go unchastised."

The sub-prior, who had his own reasons for not being at all over anxious that he should be made an accusing party against the cellarer, would, had it been possible, have stolen out of the chapter to prepare brother Thomas for his defence; but such an escape was not admissible, and a chaplain was forthwith despatched to summon the accused.

With no inconsiderable feeling of alarm, the cellarer drew near the seat of judgment; heard the charge, and would have flatly denied it, had not the sub-prior been called upon to bear witness to the fact, by Sir Simon himself. Finding, therefore, that to tell the truth was the least dangerous course in such a strait, the cellarer most heroically determined at once to speak it. As he was mustering up courage to begin, Sir Simon, who had accompanied the archdeacon to the chapter, stood forward with wrath imprinted

on every line of his face, for the hard-heartedness of Grace, who had finally denied his suit, had converted all his tender flames into those of hatred and revenge : he now, therefore, charged the cellarer with his supposed offences to his teeth.

In reply, brother Thomas stated, that he had known Grace Bolt ever since she was born ; and having been accustomed to play with her from childhood, she still appeared as a child to him : he was very fond of little children, and having also an earnest wish to talk to Grace, for the good of her own soul, about the vanity of her dress and some other follies, he admitted that he had sometimes given her a ghostly lecture in his own cell.

“Enough,” said the abbot, “enough ; the cellarer confesses his offence. What says the sub-prior ?”

“My Lord Abbot,” he answered, “I do not deny that I caught the maid in question con-

cealed in one of the towers of your lordship's private gardens."

The archdeacon gave a start, raised his hands, shrugged his shoulders, brightened up, half smiled, and then shook his head like a man who feels he ought to seem pained and surprised by a piece of information, over which he inwardly rejoices, as it is calculated to injure another with whom he is at issue, and is of a nature to lessen the estimation of that opponent at the very moment he appeared to stand so greatly above him.

But the abbot was not a whit humbled ; with the most unmoved air he merely said,—

"In my garden ! who dared to conduct her thither ? I will know."

"The foul fiend, doubtless," replied the sub-prior ; "the fiend who ever tempts woman to do that which she is forbidden, and who, by awakening in this silly wench an idle spirit of curiosity, as she has confessed, led her, after quitting brother Thomas's cell, into the Lord Abbot's garden."

“ This may be true, but it cannot exculpate the cellarer,” said the abbot ; “ wherefore should the damsel come to his cell ? ”

The cellarer could but protest what he had before protested, his innocence of all offence in the matter ; but this satisfied no one. The arch-deacon looked with an air of triumph as he unrolled his scroll of offences against the Abbey of Tavistock, and pointing with his finger to each item, shrugged his shoulders, and talked apart to his own chaplains, whilst they listened with that air of grave attention as if they were a jury called upon to deliberate before a verdict was passed on the evidence of the case. The brothers were uneasy in their stalls ; some rose, many gathered into knots, as their voices were heard in subdued murmurs, and by the echoes of the vaulted roof produced a buzzing sound, like a chorus of bees in a hive.

The cellarer wiped his brow in the heat that had been produced in him by perturbation of mind. Sir Simon, the curate, grew vehement

in his exclamations for punishment on the offender. The sub-prior seemed to be in utter despair of making any impression in favour of the culprit; when, with an air of dignity, the abbot at length arose, waved his hand to indicate his wish to speak, and this he did thrice ere anything like order could be restored. Silence however, once more prevailed in the chapter; and scarcely had the word *ordeal* passed the superior's lips, when the whole assembly, as with one voice, exclaimed, "The ordeal! the ordeal! let the cellarer have the benefit of the ordeal."

"Of red hot iron," said Sir Simon, coming up to him on the right hand.

"Of boiling water," said the archdeacon, advancing towards him on the left.

"Of hot pitch or molten lead," said the precentor, as he also drew near the condemned.

"Or of cold water by immersion," said a chaplain hard at hand.

During these several nominations of ordeal, from which, according to canonical rule, the cel-

larer was at liberty to make his own election, he stood between the proposing parties, looking first at one speaker, then at another, with a most dismal countenance, his head turning from side to side as if it moved on a pivot, eager to catch at any word that might be spoken likely to propose a mitigation of the cruel sentence from which he had to choose. But as neither hot iron, molten pitch, boiling or cold water, (and the last was that kind of ordeal by which he must risk drowning,) were at all of a nature to suit his taste, or his skin, which being smooth and sleek with good cheer, was none of the hardest, he was sorely puzzled which to choose. He would at once have named the cold water had he been able to swim, but he doubted his power of floating, and he had not, perhaps, altogether that confidence in his own innocence which, considering his perfect integrity of purpose respecting Grace Bolt, and the supposed unerring correctness of ordeals, he ought to have felt at such a crisis. He now gave a rueful look of appeal to

the sub-prior, as much as to say, "Can you do nothing to help me out of this dilemma?"

The look of appeal being made to no unfriendly person, was answered by the sub-prior saying, with much gravity,—

"All here seem to have forgotten the solemn ordeal of bread and cheese. None is more fearful, as, unless the brother who attempts to swallow such in ordeal is as clear in his innocence as yonder noon-day sun, he is sure to be choked. How say you, brother Thomas, will you venture on the ordeal of bread and cheese?"

"Most willingly," replied the cellarer, with alacrity; "that is an ordeal allowed only to holy men: it becomes, therefore, as a test spiritual.* The bread is sweet as the manna of the wilderness, and the cheese hath a smoothness in it that resembles the olive oil of Judea, or the anointing unction of holy priests and kings. I seem already, in proof of my innocence, to feel

* The ordeal of bread and cheese here described, was allowed only to monks and friars.

it going smoothly down my throat. I do at once decide for the ordeal of bread and cheese."

"Had you not better take time to consider of it, brother Thomas?" said the abbot; "you may prefer a more impressive ordeal, — the red hot iron balls, or boiling water."

"By no means," replied the cellarer, "I never was skilful at handling a ball in all my life; hot or cold, I ever let it slip through my fingers on my toes; I could never clutch it. And as for boiling water, I never could abide it; it vexes too much the spirit within me, for I, being a man of peace, like not to be put into hot water, which so unpleasantly brings to mind the discords of this vain world."

"The boiling pitch, molten lead, or cold water are equally at your discretion," said Father Alberic.

"Many thanks, most worthy archdeacon," replied the cellarer; "but my discretion leads not to any one of them! Boiling pitch and molten lead are ordeals more especially belonging to the Stannary courts, where they pour them down the

throats of miners and Jews, who are suspected of foul play with the purity of our tin. And as for the cold water, it is in no wise decorous, seeing it is an ordeal fit only for old wives suspected of witchcraft. No, most worthy archdeacon, I, a poor monk of the rule of St. Bennet, am for none of these. I have no ambition in ordeal, none that might make me eminent in story. Therefore will the ordeal of bread and cheese be quite honourable enough for such a poor simple man as I am ; and for none other will I give my voice."

"Be it so then," said Abbot Baldwin ; "it is one in accord with conventual rule."

"And quite orthodox," said the sub-prior ; "and there are many sorts of cheese to choose from."

"There are," said the cellarer, "and I would furthermore request to have permission to take my own choice ; and to be indulged with a slice of my Lord Abbot's. It is from the dairies of the good wives and thrifty housekeepers of

Cheddar; and being especially reserved for my Lord Abbot's table, it must have about it that odour of sanctity which belongs to no other compound of coagulated cream."

"You shall take as much of it as you may desire, brother Thomas," said the Abbot, "and welcome."

"Nay, good my lord, with your permission, I will take the whole," said the cellarer, "as a matter to meditate over before the day of ordeal."

And so saying, without further ceremony, the cellarer made his exit; and having the consent of his superior for what he did, nothing out of heart; and being no less strong in body than in innocence, he walked direct to my lord's kitchen, tucked the much prized cheese under his arm, smiled till his full round cheeks lifted their muscles so high as almost to close his small twinkling eyes, so great was his inward satisfaction, and thus retreated with the future ordeal of Heaven's justice to his own snug cell.

The first thing he did was to deposit the cheese in his cupboard ; then, in order to guard so precious a dainty from an unhallowed theft, he took from it a few crumbs, and set the mouse-trap at a particular spot whence he had found a quick-scented little nibbler had often sallied out to make an attack upon the choice bits and dainties of his secret store. This done, he sat down ; took a cup of his own wine to drink joy to himself for the easy manner in which he had escaped in chapter ; and, as we have already stated, that, when under the influence of mirth, he was particularly musical, he commenced quavering the snatch of an old hunting song, till, at last, he might be said to crow in his melody like chanticleer himself in his morning matins, so great was the joy of his heart on this lucky day. But we must leave him and go back to the chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,
As full of peril, and advent'rous spirit,
As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud,
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

SHAKSPEARE.

AT the moment we return to the chapter, we find my Lord Abbot and the archdeacon carrying on a stormy debate, far more in character with the quarrels of the turbulent barons of the period, than with the settlement of any question about the church. Every eye was fixed upon the speakers.

“ You refuse then,” said the archdeacon, “ to answer my Lord of Exeter touching these matters in charge against you.”

“ I deny the power of the bishop altogether within this house,” replied the abbot; “ I acknowledge no authority but that of Rome.”

“Your house has no claim of exemption by any bull or charter” said the archdeacon; “consequently you are amenable to Exeter. Therefore, in the name of the most reverend the Lord Bishop of the diocese, do I summon you, Baldwin, Abbot of Tavistock, to appear at Exeter, before my Lord Bishop, in chapter there assembled, on or before the day of the assumption of our blessed Lady, the mother of God, to answer for the facts herewith charged against you, on pain of being subject to the utmost penalties of body and soul that my Lord Bishop may please to enforce against you, even to the penalty of excommunication, if you persist in this contumacy towards his episcopal rule; a contumacy evinced towards him in my poor person, unworthy as that may be in itself, but most worthy as the deputy of my lord.”

Baldwin rose in haste, snatched his abbot's staff from the hand of the chaplain to whom he had committed it, advanced some paces towards the archdeacon, raised his head, and with an

impassioned look of offended pride, confronted him, holding forth his staff, as he delivered the following address; with an energy of manner, a resolution of purpose, and a dignity of demeanour that was altogether most impressive. "I will give no reply to this summons, saving that which I have already given, that where there is no authority to summon, there can be no duty to obey."

"This," said the archdeacon, angrily, "this refusal is more than an offence to the bishop; it is an insult to the king, by whose gracious pleasure the bishop received his investiture; and who willed that my Lord of Exeter should have power over all monasteries within this diocese of the west."

"A temporal prince," replied Abbot Baldwin, "can have no authority to will or to do within the pale of the church. Can we forget the recent evidence of this, in those fearful struggles, those long continued jars between the late King Henry and the holy martyr Saint

Thomas of Kent? He did not, I trow, die in vain; and it is our part, for whose service he shed his sacred blood, to look well that we do not betray our cause into the hands of any king, even were he proud and powerful as Pharaoh when he held in bondage the people of God."

"But bethink you," said the archdeacon, "that the king you thus openly defy, is Richard of the lion heart, the glory of chivalry, the beloved son of holy church; he who quitted a life of royal ease, a pleasant land, an easy sceptre, a kingdom at home, to seek dangers abroad,—to wield, amidst the arid sands and burning suns of Palestine, the lance and the sword of battle, to rescue a tomb—the tomb of the Lord of life, from foul and infidel hands. O Jerusalem, Richard is thy champion! — the liberator to whom thou lookest with hope amid thy tears; and yet here is one, and he, too, a Christian and a priest, who would treat with contempt the authority of such a prince."

“It is false,” exclaimed Baldwin, irritated by the turn the archdeacon had given to his words : “I said not so ; I spoke but of Richard as a temporal prince, having no power over persons spiritual, who are amenable but to God in Heaven, and to his Holiness on earth. When I stand here in vindication of my own independent right, did Richard come, armed with the chivalry of Palestine, with all his honours, like a star of that East whence they have derived their lustre, glittering on his crest, I would not fear him. No, did he come with an unsheathed falchion in his mailed hand, with all his lion heart roused into fury by the passions of a blinded rage, I would meet him with as stout a heart, and a stomach high as his own. Armed with no fleshly sword, but with my abbot’s staff, I would remember Becket ; how he met Henry face to face, and hurled upon him, and all who took part with him, the thunders of the church. Even so would I defy Richard, did he raise but a finger of authority against me,

Baldwin, as abbot of this house. Even so do I defy the power of Exeter, now before me in thy person ; and here, in the presence of this chapter, which I call on to witness to the fact, I make my appeal to Rome.”

At these words, the superior drew from his bosom a written parchment, sealed with his own seal, and making a sign to a monk who was one of the assembly, he approached, knelt and kissed the hand of the abbot, as he received from him the appeal to the Pope. At the sight of a reference made to a power so august, all the chapter rose and bowed in token of respect, for all held in awe the very name of the father of the apostolical christian and catholic church.

“ I have herewith declared my purpose in chapter,” said the abbot ; “ I shall without delay despatch my chaplains and messengers to Rome. Say as much to your bishop, for mine he is not. Say I have made my appeal of exemption from all episcopal jurisdiction ; even as did the Abbots of Battle and of St. Alban’s,

on a like account, to Pope Adrian of blessed memory; and I doubt not his Holiness, who now holds the keys of St. Peter, will be no less good lord to me than Adrian was to those abbots, and will grant me as ample a bull as I shall require at his hands."

"Proud abbot," said the archdeacon, "is this a time, when the good King Richard, who, after his defence of the holy sepulchre, has fallen into such a strait as to be prisoner to his worst enemy,—when England is torn asunder by manifold foes, by miseries numberless, till, like a mother against whom rise her own children, she bleeds from every vein in the wounds of civil strife; — is such a time as this one for churchmen to quarrel, and for pride to gain the mastery? It is not well, casting all authority aside, I tell you, as brother to brother in one calling and one faith, that in the garment of the church you have made a grievous rent. Oh! how would infidels rejoice, did they know that we send forth our lion-hearted king, the

flower of our nobles and our chivalry of England, to win an empty sepulchre from their hands, that we may but regain it to bury therein the peace of the Anglican church ; and ere our temporal swords are well sheathed, to draw them anew in the evil spirit of a rebellious pride."

The archdeacon wiped away the tears that started to his eyes as he spoke. "I see," he continued, "all the misery that will result from this contest with my Lord of Exeter. Would I could mediate ; but you are stubborn, and think yourself certain of success in this matter against my lord. Be not too certain ; remember the shaft does not always fix in the mark to which the eye directs it. Be ruled in time : let me mediate between you. Blessed are the peace-makers. Think of the peace of the church !"

"I must not on that account sacrifice the freedom of this abbey," replied Baldwin ; "I shall abide by my appeal."

"Farewell, then," said the archdeacon ; "I

see all I would do to mediate is vain. I will, therefore, take my leave; praying that the decision of his Holiness may quiet these angry jars. And though I will not do other than part from you in peace, yet my duty to my Lord of Exeter demands that, as I pass your threshold, I shake off the dust of your rebellious house from my feet."

"Such may be your duty to your bishop," said Abbot Baldwin; "but it suits not with the hospitality of our abbey that you go hence with an unbroken fast. You shall not depart our gates till you have partaken of our refection. It is near the hour. In the interval, let me pray you, most venerable archdeacon, to rest awhile in the guest-hall, where we will speedily join you. For this chapter, we here dissolve it; the brothers may depart."

The formalities and ceremonies of breaking up the chapter were speedily concluded. The archdeacon with his train retired to the guest-chamber, the monks dispersed; Abbot Baldwin remained

alone, as he was often wont to do, to make notes in his tablets of any thoughts that had occurred to him during the sitting, respecting the business of the day. He now did so in the matter of his proposed appeal to Rome.

He drew forth his book of fine ivory leaves, made his notes with the utmost deliberation, and was about to retire, when he thought he heard some one stir behind him. He looked round and perceived a small door, which led to a long gallery from the abbot's apartments, move. It was slowly opened, and a figure issued from beneath the low arch that was somewhat unusual in such a place; a man equipped in the defensive armour of a knight. He wanted only the lance and triangular shield.* He was clad in a coat of chain mail; to the long and close sleeves of which were attached gloves, also of linked steel, that covered his hands to the fingers' ends: they

* These pieces of armour, on account of their great weight, were seldom carried by the knight himself, unless when in action, being at other times borne by his pages, or esquire.

were as flexible as those made of leather. Indeed, from the smallness of the rings of which the chain armour of the twelfth century was composed, it was in no way an impediment to the action of the limbs ; whilst, from its high polish, it reflected the light on every movement of the body, even as water reflects the gleams of the sun at every undulation of the wave. His legs and feet, also, were completely covered by this close fitting mail. On his head was a flat-crowned steel cap, to which was attached that part of the armour called the gorget, that protected the throat and chin : to this cap, in time of battle, was affixed a piece of armour to protect the face, formed of iron bars in front, through which the wearer could see and breathe : it was called the *Aventaille*.* The surcoat of this warlike figure, (of crimson silk richly embroidered, but stained and worn,) was girt round the middle by a leathern

* The *Aventaille* was first brought into use by the crusaders, during the holy wars in Syria. See, " *Monumental Effigies*."

belt, fastened in front by a buckle of gold. On his left side he wore a sword, the blade of which was straight, and the handle in the form of a cross. A small and richly inlaid dagger hung in his girdle.

This armed figure, whose sudden appearance so surprised Abbot Baldwin, was tall and stately; indeed, the warrior dress he wore seemed calculated to make him so appear, even had nature done her work in a manner less striking; but she had formed it in one of her noblest and most beautiful moulds. His countenance was youthful, manly, and commanding. The upper part of the forehead and the lower of the chin were hidden; as the small square aperture left by the cap for the face (all the rest being covered by the gorget fastened to the steel cap at the sides of the head,) allowed only the more prominent features, and the upper lip, to be seen. The eyes, dark and penetrating, had in them a glance that indicated an impatient and a haughty spirit.

The expression of the whole countenance was, at this moment, perturbed.

As Abbot Baldwin hastily inquired who he might be that thus strangely and suddenly came into his presence in a manner so unwonted, and in so unusual a place, the armed figure eagerly replied, "Do you not know me? can a mailed coat and a cap of steel thus alter a man, that his friend need ask his name?"

He approached nearer: Baldwin started. "Holy Mary!" he exclaimed, "Henry de Pomeroy! Can it be?—impossible! He is even now with the Earl of Mortaigne."

"He was with the Earl of Mortaigne," replied the stranger, "but he is no longer so; he is a fugitive, like the hart that flies before the hunters and the hounds. Henry de Pomeroy now stands before you, a defeated man!"

"And the Earl of Mortaigne?" said the abbot, with an eagerness that scarcely allowed him to draw breath. "What of him,—is his cause lost?"

“Not so, I trust,” replied Henry de Pomeroy ;
“not lost, though the bark of his fortunes is fast driving towards the rocks. The Earl of Mortaigne seized the castle of Windsor. Philippe of France, in secret, aided him with money and men-at-arms. I joined him. We might have defied all assaults, had the Baron de St. Lo kept faith with us. But he came not, as he had pledged his word to do, to man the castle with a sufficient force. In the meanwhile certain friends and adherents of the captive Richard besieged Earl John in this strong hold of Windsor. We held out till the fear of famine compelled us to yield. At this juncture, our envoy, in returning from Philippe, being taken prisoner, betrayed certain letters to the victorious friends of the king. By these they learnt the truth ; and without pause denounced John, Earl of Mortaigne, a traitor to his brother Richard : for hitherto John had made some matters of quarrel between these bold barons and himself a pretext for seizing the castle. But all was now changed : all who had

proclaimed themselves his partisans were dealt with by the severest measures. Many were even hanged by these proud and triumphant barons. I escaped with the prince, who is now gone to Nottingham, there to join his power; and hither am I come to bear these tidings of mischance to his friends in the West."

"Does your purpose end so?" inquired the abbot, with a peculiar tone and air.

"No," said Henry de Pomeroy; "it has a larger aim. I come to rouse the friends of the Earl of Mortaigne, both in Devon and in Cornwall: to raise men and means; and once more to hold ourselves prepared for the moment when John may, with a bold hand, seize that sceptre which his brother has so recklessly thrown aside, like a bauble, from his grasp. This is my purpose. I arrived but now; and desirous to communicate these matters to you alone, I sought Cædmon, your Saxon page, and prayed him to guide me where I might gain speech with you in private after your chapter. I have now told you all.

These are times that demand action. We must not slumber when the lion is about to be unchained."

"Never," exclaimed Baldwin, "never shall Richard again put his foot on English ground."

"Truly you have no cause to love this crusading king," said Henry de Pomeroy; "he has been no good friend to you."

"An ingrate!" exclaimed the abbot; "he has been to me like the frozen viper, warmed in the bosom it requites with its sting."

"Did you not," inquired De Pomeroy, "offend the deceased King Henry by taking part with his rebellious son? I have heard men report as much."

"The quarrel was unnatural," said the abbot. "I did but seek to shield him from his father's wrath. He loved me; and then was I to Richard even as David was to Jonathan; we two were as a double bosom owning but one heart. I toiled for him, served him; and how, think you, he requited my pains?"

“By making you, by his influence, abbot of this house ; was it not so ?”

“It was. But was that, I trow, a fitting requital to me ?—to me who looked to be primate of all England ! But I was passed over, and another Baldwin chosen in my stead.* This is an insult never to be forgotten. No more of it : let us talk of other matters. I have here a list ” (he drew forth a scroll as he spoke) “ of those who are thought to be friends to Prince John. These we must secure. Men and means must be found ; the stout castles of the West must be ours ; and then shall we be ready to meet all occasions of necessity. We heard that, previous to this last contest, you and Prince John had a hot battle with the friends of Richard.”

“It was with William de Stuteville, who led on the power of the Archbishop of York,” said Henry de Pomeroy. “The contest was brief, but

* The abbot probably alludes to that Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died at Ptolemais during the Crusades

manly. Our men stood like a tower in the depth and strength of their ranks ; whilst their winged arrows flew so thick and fast, that the very face of heaven was darkened with their flight : where they fell they fixed ; a life was struck by every shaft."

"Where was the Earl of Mortaigne?" inquired the abbot ; "was he in the battle?"

"He was in its very heart," replied Henry de Pomeroy. "John, with his falchion in his hand, that day made his passage through all opposition. The lightning, when it darts from the cloud, is not more fierce or sudden than was his spirit. Now he was seen leading on the van, till he met his foes face to face ; their very aventailles struck in the closeness of the encounter. The horses they rode seemed to understand the conflict, to strain at the curb that held them back, as their expanded nostrils and reared heads showed their impatience for the fray. The prince brought with him victory. At one part of the field where all seemed lost, with but the waving of his pennon he turned the fortunes of the battle."

“He is a brave prince,” said the abbot; “he shall want no aid that we can give him. Have you the letters that I sent to you at Berry Pomeroy Castle, ere you ventured on this business?”

“I have,” replied Henry. “I have thought upon their contents; their counsel to me seems good and wise. You say she is heiress to her dead father’s lands in Normandy and England; that a kinswoman purchased the wardship of her from the king. This is well—but is she fair and young? and —”

“She is fair as the lily drooping on its bed,” answered the abbot; “she hath, too, that most excellent spirit of meekness, which in woman is so precious. Her kinswoman, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, keeps her much from the world. She is as a flower in the shade, on which the sun has scarcely looked with an ardent eye. She were worthy to become a prince’s bride. I know well her guardian, who keeps the fair Adela, for that is the maiden’s name, more like a votress

in a cell than as an heiress inhabiting her own castle. Yet will I contrive that you shall meet ; for I have much influence with the Lady Alicia ; and when once known to her fair charge, the Lord of Berry Pomeroy, young, débonnaire, and brave, need not fear a denial to his suit !”

“ I will not fear it,” said the youthful warrior ; “ and trust me, Father Abbot, if I win her by your aid, I will not be ungrateful. I have influence with the Earl of Mortaigne. Once let his partisans, of which we are not the meanest, place the crown on John’s head, and your own shall soon bear its augmented honours, as a mitred abbot among our peers !”

“ And Exeter, that proud bishop, shall no longer insult our power,” said Baldwin, “ by asserting any right of rule over this house. But I must leave you ; for even now does his arch-deacon wait for me in the guest-chamber. There join us. But you must first seek Cædmon ; bid the Saxon page conduct you to a chamber near my own. There disarm ; attire you in a less

warlike habit ; these mailed trappings might excite some spirit of curiosity at such a time. There are abundance of tunics and gowns in the wardrobes of my chamber. I will despatch Cædmon to the Lady Alicia, to request permission that I may bring with me a noble friend to hunt upon her lands. Her young charge delights to witness such sports. This hunting will surely lead the way to your becoming known to her. We shall meet anon in the refectory, —till then, farewell !”

So spake the abbot ere he retired from the chapter-house ; Henry de Pomeroy lost no time in obeying his directions, and went forthwith to seek the page who had already privately admitted him, and to whom he was now to be beholden for a civil dress, suited to his rank and the state in which he moved.

CHAPTER VIII.

Great chere made our hoste everich one,
And to the supper set he us anone ;
And served us with vitaille of the beste ;
Strong was the wine, and wel to drinke us leste.

CHAUCER.

THE hostrey, or guest-hall of the abbey was a noble chamber : on either side were seen a row of pillars supporting the arches of the carved oak ceiling. The furniture was costly ; it had been chosen by the present abbot, who, in whatever appertained to his person or his dwelling, was splendid and sumptuous. The richest hangings decorated the walls, and the tapers that at night were burnt in this apartment, in sconces of silver, were perfumed with ambergris and cloves.

It was here that the archdeacon, his train, and Henry de Pomeroy, were waiting a summons to the refectory. The latter had changed a military for a civil habit, and wore a rich dalmatic of Genoese crimson silk over a tunic of green ; its ample folds were bound round the middle by a rich belt ; and as he advanced with a graceful step into the room, the drapery of his long and purple robe showed on his tall and stately person to the greatest advantage. The robe was embroidered with silver stars, and fastened on the left shoulder with a fibula, or brooch, of emeralds and gold. His boots were short and furred ; and round his head he wore a chaplet, or circle of pearls, that confined the hair, which, according to the fashion of the time, (a fashion so severely reprobated in the sermons of the clergy,) was suffered to grow long, and fall flowing over the back.

It was in this chamber that the hosteler met the guests, and gave to each the Benedicite, and the kiss of peace. Soon after he conducted them

to the refectory, where the abbot intended to entertain the archdeacon with all the ceremonies and solemnities of his house. The refectory was a long and rather low chamber; short and massive columns supported the roof; it was but feebly lighted by the small round-headed windows of its primitive construction. A stone pulpit projected from the north side of the wall, where the reader appointed to lecture during the repast always took his station. At the east end, above the panelling of oak, was seen a large and rude picture representing the crucifixion. Within the doorway, on the left hand, was an *almery*, or poor box; and there, also, stood the *grace cup*;—a cup so called on account of its being handed round to every monk, immediately after the grace, as the finishing draught of a meal. In some religious houses, where the superior was particularly indulgent, it was often long ere the rap of the prior's hammer upon the table called for the finishing goblet of the day.

We have somewhat dwelt on these curious customs of our ancient monasteries, because few of our general readers can have the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with them ; and if those who chance to know more than we do of the subject, should find such notices impertinent, we can only recommend them to resort to the very common practice of skipping ; when, a few pages passed over, they may follow the narrative in unbroken succession. Few readers, however, will object to the items of a good dinner. We trust, therefore, that none will do our abbot such discourtesy as to refuse to accompany him to the social board.

Baldwin entered the refectory bare-headed, his arms crossed upon his breast, with an air of modest dignity in his deportment, combined with the ease of one accustomed to high society, who is about to do the honours in his own house. He was attended by several of his chaplains, and four youths ; two were pages of the *digitus*, the other two of the *covered cup*. As he entered all

present rose, and remained standing; till after having first saluted the cross, the abbot proceeded to the *digitus* at the side table, where the pages whose duty it was ministered to him, whilst the prior poured from a silver ewer, perfumed water into a basin of like material, and presented to him a napkin to dry his hands after the ceremony of ablution.

This done, he advanced to the head of his own separate table, to which he had invited the arch-deacon and Sir Henry de Pomeroy. The prior and sub-prior presided at the long tables appropriated to the monks. On a signal being given, two of the singing chaplains advanced to the foot of the abbot's board, and sang the Latin grace.* The grace was led off by a few notes struck by the precentor, on an instrument he held in his hand, and used as the moderns do the pitch-pipe in a country church. This instrument, called a *tabula*, was of bone, ornamented with gold and

* A ceremony still observed at the tables of our colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

silver, in form not unlike the ancient lyre ; indeed the office of precentor, or chanter, in the monasteries, seemed to answer to that of the Coryphæus, or leader of the choruses, in the ancient drama of the Greeks.

On the abbot's table were several loaves of wassel bread, two of which only were allowed for use, the other four being allotted to the poor. There also stood the orthodox jug of single beer, and the modest half sextary of small wine. But these humble liquors, though strictly enjoined by rule for an abbot's table, were, like the hundred hob-nails, presented in our times to the Lord Mayor of London on the day of his inauguration, a mere ceremony of office, more for show than use. In earlier ages, the being able to count the century of nails, proclaimed that the individual chosen for the civic lordship was possessed of sufficient education to enable him to perform the duties of his place ; as an alderman who could not tell that two and two made four, would never have been deemed efficient to calculate what might be due

to the account of justice, when fines, amercements, and penalties, paid down in hard coin, constituted the laws of reparation, as well as of punishment, in most cases of ordinary offence, and even in some of a criminal nature. But notwithstanding, by the progress of time, the constitution of the realm and the entire state of education have changed in this country, the custom of the hobnails, though no longer necessary, is still duly observed in the ceremony of making a Lord Mayor. Even so was the jug of weak beer, and of still weaker wine retained, as the ancient and ordained potations befitting a Lord Abbot. But as the indulgence to partake of better things, depended solely on his own will, our abbot was content with the mere presence of the humbler liquors, without drawing upon them for use. In fact, he held them as a commander holds his troops in times of peace, to be always ready at the roll call, to answer to their names, but without any intention of leading them into action.

Abbot Baldwin, though he liked good cheer

when he had no deep schemes in his immediate consideration, to spoil his relish and injure his digestion, was by no means a selfish man in any such matters. He did not, therefore, deny that indulgence to others which he granted to himself. Yet let not scandal assail his memory with any undue suspicions on this head. The monks of Tavistock were really no toppers : they were allowed a social but not a solitary cup ; and the cheerful was never suffered to degenerate into the intoxicating bowl. If it did, now and then, by any stolen indulgence become such, the offender never escaped unpunished. In such cases he had either a severe taste of discipline awarded to his back, or he was imprisoned in the monastery, or he had his hood and frock turned wrong side outwards, so to be worn during many days ; an ancient mode of punishment for drunkenness still retained among our old soldiers and sailors, by having their coats turned at Chelsea or Greenwich Hospitals.

The potations that flanked those of ceremony,

already named, were as various as they were excellent ; they consisted of clary, metheglin, piment, and vernage, a mixture of wine, honey, and spices, and the still richer hippocrass. Two windows in the refectory opened from the great kitchen, and through these were served the meats, hot and hot, to the tables.

No sooner had the dishes appeared, than the officer, called the *particularius*, cut up the food into *a commons* ; such being the allotted portion for one monk ; but to the novices and scholars was given *a pittance*, which was nothing more nor less than an allowance for two lads on one plate ; a circumstance by no means favourable to the justice due to a growing boy's stomach, if he happened to have in his *fellow commoner* * a youth stouter, and more active in the play of the fingers than himself, with better grinders and a larger swallow.

The dishes now served were by no means in-

* An ancient name for one who is accustomed to eat with another, from one trencher or plate, in convent or college.

different; for no monastery in the West could boast better cooks than our Abbey of Tavistock; and though the fare was capital at all the tables, that served to my Lord Abbot's, for its variety and *recherché* character, might have figured in the carte of a modern Parisian restaurateur.

Yet we must here observe, that spiritual persons, according to strict canonical rule, were permitted to eat of no four-footed thing; because God had cursed the beasts of the earth on the fall of Adam. But, with truly nice discrimination, indulging themselves in a little quibbling with the courts of heaven, even as the gentlemen of the long robe do with those of the law, the worthy monks had considered that as in this curse the word *earth* had been introduced to distinguish those animals that walked upon it from the winged inhabitants of its neighbour element, the *air*, the creatures of the latter were not to be held as excommunicated from holy stomachs. Hence arose the reprobation of *four-footed* things, and that most unrelenting war which brothers of conventual rule

never relaxed against ducks, geese, swans, and all manner of feathered fowl : till, at length, finding a larger variety of food was necessary for a large fraternity, and that many capital creatures, fat bucks for instance, ran on all fours, they got over the canonical scruple by introducing an indulgence on the plea of necessity ; so that at the last, it came to this, there was no necessity at all to observe the rule, excepting whenever they might be so disposed.

But we will not follow up this subject. We will not intrude on the province of Mrs. Glass, though, as that celebrated book (which notwithstanding the brittle name of its pseudo author, has had so long an existence,) is said to be really the work of a bishop, we might plead even episcopal authority, were we disposed to give a chapter on ecclesiastical cookery. We shall, however, content ourselves with saying, that among the good things at the abbot's table was one that made a great show, — a fine, fat, roasted swan, in *Jew's chains*, which was nothing less

than the bird being hung with pork sausages ; so designated in derision of that people, who would rather go to prison than eat swine's flesh in defiance to their law. There were also the cold baked meats, that Hamlet talks about as decorating funeral feasts ; and every possible variety of pastry, creams, sweetmeats, and perfumes.

And all this Abbot Baldwin called his *poor fare*, as he welcomed the archdeacon and his guests to his *poor house* ; and glancing his eye round the refectory with a look of proud humility, he bade all be seated at the conclusion of the grace ; and the refectioner rang a small hand-bell at the warning of what was called the *charity* ; namely, that each monk was on this day to have poured out to him a cup of hydromel at the commencement of his repast. The word was given, and now Cædmon, the reader for the day, ascended the stone pulpit and opened his book.

Still he had to wait till silence should prevail ; for, at present, there was all the clatter and com-

motion attending a numerous body of men dining together in hall. And the servants and obedientaries were still running about, presenting to each brother a super tunic to save his frock and the nappery from the spoonfuls of soup and rich gravies which might be spilt in being carried from the plate to the mouth. Greatly will our readers wonder when we tell them that these *super tunics*, through which the monks poked their arms and tucked under their chins, were not unlike the garment the good little people, in our schools or nurseries, have so carefully put upon them before sitting down to dinner.

There is a solidity of purpose about Englishmen which makes them always intent over a good thing. Hence is it that, unlike their neighbours the French, they are no great chatterers at dinner. But in the monasteries, as there were a good many services within the church, and silence was absolute after complin, they were more apt to talk at their meals than are in general the natives of these isles. Abbot Baldwin, however, found

such a perpetual gossiping, which not unfrequently resembled the gabbling of geese, or the buzzing of bees in a hive, a great let to the reader (who sometimes read the learned abbot's own compositions); it not a little annoyed him, and more especially, when he had guests at his own table. He determined, therefore, to give a check to their loquacity by enjoining that, on all days of especial ceremony, the worthy brothers should be permitted to talk only in Latin; a permission that put the curb upon their satirical jestings, their stories to provoke laughter, and their gossipings, as effectually as if they were under the severest penance in discourse.

At such seasons they were also enjoined to express their wants at dinner by the use of what was called the *signa necessaria*, or, literally, the language of signs, which was a sort of shorthand talking with the fingers. Thus, on these peculiar days, if a monk needed some fish, he waved his hand like the tail of a fish in the water; and if he wanted a slice of venison from

my Lord Abbot's board, he was to hold up his two fingers, on either side his temples, to denote the horns of a deer. It was surprising to see how many brothers were eager to put forth this sign on venison days in the refectory. Indeed, so many and so various were these signs, that it was acquiring a language that resembled the manual exercise to learn them.

Whilst the repast was proceeding, the chaplains, called the monitors, from their duty being to report to the abbot or prior whatever they observed amiss, ranged from table to table, and gave a shrewd eye to the novices, pages, and scholars.

Before the reader commenced his task, the abbot, as a matter of courtesy, prepared to go through one of the highest ceremonials of the day, that of the *covered cup* (for his was the only one allowed to have a cover); the youth who was the cup-bearer ascended the dais, (or raised platform on which stood the superior's table,) knelt before the abbot, gave the cover to his

fellow page, and after reverently kissing his lord's hand, presented to him a goblet filled with the choicest wine. Baldwin took the richly chased and sparkling cup, and with an air of dignity, bowing as he named his guests, pledged the archdeacon and his friends. After this the cup was presented to each, with an air of profound respect, by the pages of the dais.

All being seated, and all having drunken a draught, the business of dinner was seriously commenced; whilst Cædmon read aloud from a curious history, which he had composed on the authority of the ancient chronicles of the house:—"A true and faithful Narration of the Foundation of the Abbey of Tavistock, by Orgar, Earl or Heretoge of Devon; and the curious events connected with the court of that most noble Earl; also, how the abbey was burnt by the Danes, and built again only thirty years after its original construction."

Cædmon having gone through his reading, the abbot struck the table with the palm of his

hand ; on which signal, a little page, son of a noble Norman, advanced and knelt on the step of the dais, ready to fulfil his pleasure. It was to send a cup of wine to the reader. Cædmon descended from his pulpit to receive it ; the abbot again struck the table thrice to denote that dinner was ended and the grace might be sung. Once more did the precentor and the chaplains step forward to perform their duties.

The abbot now rose and pronounced the benediction. The spoon officer was already engaged in going round the tables and collecting the spoons, assisted by the cellarer ; and according to rule, the former took especial care to hold my Lord Abbot's spoon in the right hand, and all the rest in the left.

In the midst of this bustle, and before the abbot and his guests had quitted the dais, there was a stir at the end of the hall that arrested attention. The servant of the locutory now came forward and announced that certain pilgrims were at the gates, demanding admission ; and

that the janitor (who, according to rule, was to be a "wise old man,") had left them standing without the wicket, till he should know his lord's pleasure, as it was past the hour for admitting strangers.

The abbot directed that they should be let in, and declared his intention to receive them himself. Previous to their entrance, however, the hosteler came to make his report. He said that some of the strangers were pilgrims of an ordinary sort ; they had been as poor sinners to the shrine of St. Thomas-à-Kent to look upon his cloven skull. He had ascertained this at a glance, by observing that they wore round their necks the *Canterbury bells* ; that jingled like sheep-bells wherever they went ; and none but St. Thomas's pilgrims might put them on. Others were on their way to the blessed well of St. Maderne, in Cornwall ; and of one, who came alone, he knew nothing excepting that he had a grey beard, and must therefore be an old man. He was, to be sure, a palmer ; for he

carried attached to his bourbon, or pilgrim's staff, the branch of a palm-tree. He had merely stated to the hosteler that he came hither on his return from the Holy Land, to offer his bourbon and scrip at the altar of the abbey church.

“He must be then originally of this parish,” said the abbot; “or he would not make such an offering here. Marshal him hither; we would gladly hear the news from Palestine, and how matters stand in the Holy Land, since the capture of our king.”

CHAPTER IX.

Around his form his loose long robe was thrown,
And wrapt a breast bestow'd on Heaven alone.

BYRON.

An oath is a recognizance to Heaven,
Binding us over in the courts above.

SOUTHERN.

THE hosteler soon returned, conducting the company of pilgrims. The palmer came last and spoke last ; for were it age, or timidity, or both combined to depress his spirits in the presence of strangers, he was heard to sigh deeply, as he bent his knee before the Lord Abbot, and seemed to shun rather than to seek notice. This was the more remarkable, as palmers in general were apt to thrust themselves forward, and to be eager in assuming that importance which was then

ceded to the traveller who returned from such far distant lands.

The other pilgrims easily satisfied the inquiry of the abbot. One had been to Rome to see the Veronica, or sacred handkerchief, impressed with a portrait of the Lord of life, as he had wiped his face with it, when on his way to Calvary. Another had visited the church of St. John of Lateran, which had been built by the Emperor Constantine after his baptism. The rest were returning from the shrine of St. Thomas-à-Kent, excepting one, who came to offer, at the altar of St. Rumon, a *statual taper*. This was nothing less than an immense wax candle, the weight of a child that had been stolen by the wandering beggars from its parents: the unhappy father hoped by such an offering, accompanied by his prayers, to propitiate the saint for the recovery of his child; and for this purpose he intended, also, to consult the mystical waters of the holy well of St. Maderne, in Cornwall.

All these individuals had been so willing to disclose the purposes and motives of their pilgrimage, that the reserve of the palmer became the more remarkable, and did but fix the abbot's attention more exclusively upon himself. The superior was curious to know who he was, and whence he came.

The palmer was a tall man ; clad in a *scavina*, or long gown of woollen cloth. His scrip hung across his shoulders ; he was girded with a leathern belt, and a scarf was thrown carelessly over his gown. On his broad-brimmed pilgrim's hat (usually worn turned up in front, though not so with him,) he displayed not merely the well known scallop shell, but what was called a sign of Sinai, also ; that was a relic from the Holy Land. In the present instance it was a small piece of wood, said to be a portion of the tree under which our Lord had seen Nathaniel, "that Israelite without guile." We fear scarcely so much could be said of the fabricator of the relic, whoever he might have been. A

rosary of amber beads, and the bourbon the palmer carried in his hands, surmounted by a branch of dry and withered palm, completed his equipments as a devotee from the Holy Land.

There was something noble but sad in the expression of his countenance ; the features of which, though worn and altered by change of climate, and that still greater change, perhaps, produced by the passions of the soul, must in youth have been eminently handsome. On an attentive consideration of his countenance, he might be said to be more old in cares than in years. And as at this period both clergy and laity had renounced the wearing of beards, they were seldom seen on the chins of any, excepting very poor persons ; the grey beard, therefore, of our palmer might serve not only to disguise him, but to indicate he was a man of very mean condition.

On being questioned, he admitted that he was a native of the parish of Tavistock, where he desired to offer up, and to redeem for a small

sum, his bourbon and scrip, in gratitude for his safe return to the land of his birth. But on being asked his name, he replied simply, "Walter the Palmer."

"No other!" said the abbot, in a tone of surprise; "for this can alone have been yours since you became a palmer."

"Walter of the Plant Wormwood, may it please you, then," said the palmer; "for by that name was I known till I gained the palm by visiting the tomb of our Lord."

"You are a pilgrim of sorrow, then," said the abbot, for at the date of our narrative it was common with persons going on pilgrimage, or to the Holy Land wars, to assume a *sobriquet*, or penitential name, as it was called, altogether suppressing their own. Motives of humility and repentance sometimes led to this, as a disguise to their rank and station, and sometimes it was a matter of convenience, if they were labouring under any circumstances that rendered a tem-

porary obscurity desirable for their affairs.* But though these *sobriquets* were not at all uncommon, they were so when assumed by poor people, who, having no rank or state from which any merit could be derived by its being laid aside for awhile, and who, being too insignificant and too obscure to be pursued by any enemy as far as the East, had no motive for disguise. That the palmer was poor, was a thing to be inferred from his long beard, and the very coarse materials of which his dress was composed. The abbot's curiosity, therefore, was greatly excited by all the circumstances we have named, and he still further pressed on the stranger to declare himself.

The palmer, without giving any answer, laid aside his staff, bared his right arm, and showed

* Geoffrey of Anjou, the father of Henry the Second of England, on assuming the bourbon and the scrip, to go on one of these incognito pilgrimages, had taken, as his name of penitence, that of a lowly plant, the *Planta-genista*, or *Plantagenet*, or the *broom*; a devotional name which stuck to his posterity, till it became a proper one, and was, therefore, afterwards affixed to the blood royal of England.

that he wore, soldered upon it, an iron ring of some weight. All present crossed themselves at the sight, in token of respect to the vow of penance which this ring so fastened, indicated had been made by the wearer, from some secret motive, in the name the most sacred to the Christian church.

“I am under a vow, holy father,” said the palmer. “Before the blessed sepulchre itself was I vowed never to reveal my name, my family, my degree, or the one great purpose for which I live and breathe; never to suffer this iron, so painful to the flesh that bears it, to be struck off this arm, till I have visited in deepest humility, and have performed an enjoined penance, at every one of those holy places to which I have bound my soul in my secret vow. Thus much I am at liberty to speak. The visitations to which I am sworn will detain me for some time in the neighbourhood of this abbey, though I must have no fixed home. I must visit, ere I quit the west, the Mount of St. Michael, and

one place more ; after which, reverend father, I shall be at liberty to tell my name and lineage. But till such time comes, I rest me Walter of the Plant Wormwood, an unhappy man, vowed to penance for his sins ; a poor but true servant of the church. Having spoken these things concerning myself, I have nothing more to add."

"The blessed Virgin forbid that we should do other than respect your vow, holy palmer," said the abbot ; "yet we may, without infringing it, require of you the news from Palestine. We pray you to rest your weary limbs ; sit, pilgrim, sit, the hosteler will speedily bring in the basins and water for the Maundy. As wayfarers and pilgrims from a distant land, it is our duty to wash your feet, holy men. But we will grant ourself a dispensation this evening from the performance of our duty ; and our brother, the cellarer, who is under sentence of ordeal, shall be our proxy. Let the cellarer be called hither, to wash these good men's feet ; you shall not lack a cup to refresh you after your journey ; and

we will order the *consolatio* * in our own chamber. There we invite you, holy palmer, and as many of these pilgrims as would rather partake with us, than with the brothers. You, most venerable archdeacon, have declared your purpose of going early to rest ; we will not, therefore, require your company. But you, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, are a young man, and care not, therefore, to close your eyes at the hour the birds fold their wings ; we therefore invite you ; and we doubt not that the intelligence we shall gain from Palestine will much cheer and delight both you and us poor recluses, who live within our melancholy cells, shut out from all the vain pleasures of the world we have renounced.”

The palmer, two or three of the pilgrims, and Sir Henry de Pomeroy accepted the invitation ; and at the hour of the *consolatio*, the abbot found his private chamber strewed with fresh rushes, the board laid on tressels ready for the

* The *consolatio* was a private supper in the abbot's apartment.

repast, and his servants about to spread the nappery and to bring up the dishes. All was soon ready; and Baldwin welcomed his guests as one by one they saluted him with an air of dignified courtesy, that well became him as abbot of the house.

CHAPTER X.

This rash, romantic war,
Begot by hot-brained bigots and fomented
By the intrigues of proud designing priests :
All ages have their madness, this is ours.

LILLO.

SHALL we look at the group assembled in the abbot's chamber, gentle reader, before we proceed to the matter of their discourse ? The picture it presents to our view is striking ; it is worth a moment's pause.

There sits the abbot at the head of the board ; he has exchanged his dress of state for one of private ease ; his air and demeanour are less austere, more pleasing. This is the hour of domestic indulgence without ceremony. Yet

even now, his stateliness of carriage being natural to him, cannot wholly be laid aside ; and though his mind is in repose, yet is there something in the expression of those quiescent features, and in the glance of that haughty and penetrating eye, that seems to say the passions which have left so strong an impress in their course, did but slumber for awhile, and were liable to be roused up on the slightest call of offended pride, to resume their empire with all their wonted force.

Near the abbct sits Sir Henry de Pomeroy ; there is in him a luxuriousness of manly beauty in its bloom, mingled with a free and soldier-like air, that altogether would render the young and gallant knight a fit representative for a painter who wished to portray an Anthony after victory, in his hours of voluptuous ease. His beautiful hair, with its long curled and perfumed locks, his fair forehead, and his looks of indolent enjoyment being singularly contrasted with the general form and structure of his body and his

limbs, which indicate strength and vigour of a more than ordinary kind.

In the finest possible relief, if we may be allowed so to express ourselves, to this luxuriousness of youthful beauty, is seen the palmer. He stands with his eyes intently fixed upon the young warrior, who forms so remarkable a contrast to his own tall and sombre figure, wrapped in the long and ample folds of his simple and coarse gown; his head, now bare, for he had taken off his pilgrim's hat, is of the most marked kind. The countenance pale, the features regular, and though a good deal wrinkled about the eyes and brow, yet not other than handsome; whilst the long beard falling over the bosom, gives, as a beard always does, so venerable an air to the head, that he looks many years older than he really is.

The two or three other pilgrims who are present, add to the picturesque character of the group, as they are all persons of a goodly form and mien; and Cædmon the Saxon, the favourite page of the abbot, availing himself of his

privilege to be near his lord's person, now sits on a low stool near his feet, and completes the picture.

“Will you take nothing but so cold a cup as one of water, holy palmer?” said the abbot. “Take a cup of wine,—remember what says the Apostle,—for thy stomach's sake. It will not, I trust, infringe upon thy vow to pledge me in this!” He filled one with hyppocrass, and handed it to the stranger.

“I may not misprize such courtesy,” said the palmer. “By my vow I am bound to temperance, not to abstinence. Therefore, holy father, I may venture to pledge you in this fair cup, with thanks for the hospitality of your house. I have not tasted such a draught since I quaffed one of hyppocrass in the tents of our crusaders, after we had become masters of Acre.”

“You have served in these wars, then?” said the abbot; “and peradventure we ought to call you *Sir* Walter of the Plant Wormwood,—a knight may be?”

“I said not so,” replied the palmer. “My bracelet of iron must excuse my further answer.”

“It must, indeed,” said the abbot. “We spoke without thought of thy vow. But, believe us, we have no idle curiosity. Our arrow was but as the fool’s bolt, cast at a venture from a bow drawn in idleness. We will ask but such questions as any man may answer,—the last tidings of Richard. For such a captive as he of the lion’s heart, cannot be kept from the thoughts of his people, though he may from their eyes. Have you, in your journey hither, heard aught of him?”

“Nothing but what has been often told,” replied the palmer, “that John, Earl of Mortaigne, the unnatural brother of our brave Richard, combined with his enemies, and supported by the envious and malicious Philippe of France, conspire together to bribe the Emperor and the Duke of Austria still to detain captive the royal Richard, till his usurping brother may find occasion to seat himself in security upon England’s

throne. But Heaven will not suffer that treacherous brother, that coward heart, to prevail !”

“ John, Earl of Mortaigne, is no coward !” said Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as he glanced his eye indignantly at the palmer. “ And in my presence no man may call him so, without answering to me the foul scorn so cast upon his princely name.”

“ Peace ! peace ! my son,” said the alarmed abbot, who feared Sir Henry’s sudden passion might betray more than it would be safe to let out just at this crisis. “ Know you not, a palmer, and one having a vow, cannot underlay any man’s challenge ? To speak thus is, therefore, folly ; and yonder good man’s grey beard should be his warrant, so that an over hasty word may receive a pardon without more ado.”

“ He shall ask it, then,” said Sir Henry, stubbornly ; “ he shall ask it. The Prince is my friend.”

“ I am not his enemy,” said the palmer : “ I have nothing to do with the quarrels of princes.

My vow dedicates my thoughts to Heaven; and to Heaven, therefore, can I alone pray to set at rest these unhappy feuds; and to restore peace, hope, charity, brotherly love to England, from the princes of the royal blood, down to the poorest of her people."

"Well, let us speak of Palestine," said the abbot, glad to turn the conversation from such dangerous ground. "That is a country I would fain have visited, had occasion so permitted. What news thence?"

"News most sad," said the palmer: "the infidels, no longer in fear of the mighty Richard, break the truce every hour. Once more are our pilgrims interrupted, maltreated, robbed, murdered. Yet even do the very infidels, who thus profit by the captivity of Richard, deplore it, and do that for the princes of Europe which they are too shameless in their envy to do for themselves;—they blush that the brave king's mates in arms can let him lie imprisoned by one of their own Christian faith, and not rise to a

man to free him. Their expedition must fall to ruin wanting his aid ; even as the body falls into the dust, when the heart ceases to animate it with the purple tide of life."

"No man denies Richard the praise of valour," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy. "He owes his courage to his English stock, but his pride to his own spirit ; and that few men can brook."

The palmer fixed his inquiring eye on the young baron, as he said, "Whilst Richard was free, no man claiming knighthood dared have spoken as much, unless he set his life at naught. To slander the absent and the unfortunate is not well. Young sir, were the king once more at liberty, your vaunted courage might be but as a quivering flame, that would expire at the very fear of Richard !"

Henry de Pomeroy started up, laid his hand on his dagger, but recollecting who it was who had said this, he dashed the half drawn weapon back into its sheath, and calling himself petulantly a fool, to be thus angered by a grey-

beard, sank down into his seat, and preserving a moody air, scarcely spoke five words to the palmer during the rest of the evening.

The abbot again endeavoured to direct the conversation to other subjects. He talked of Syria; of the holy sepulchre; the miraculous images and relics: and received such answers from the palmer as showed he had been an attentive observer of the scenes through which he had passed; and the changes Judea had undergone in the latter ages seemed very forcibly to strike him.

“ I have visited,” said he, “ that land of majestic memory. With feelings of the deepest awe have I stood where holy men trod of old; where the princes of an ancient people rose, like its suns, matchless in splendour; princes of a favoured line, fearful in their spirit, glorious in their adoption, the chosen of God; mighty even in their shadows, in the memory of their long departed greatness. That land where prophet arose after prophet, and with a voice, as

of a fiery trumpet in the wilderness, aroused a sleeping world, proclaiming to the nations the coming of their King.”

The palmer looked upward as he spoke ; an expression of awe was strongly imprinted on every feature of his face ; and his voice became deep and emphatic as he dwelt on the wonders, and the sacred character of those scenes, so surpassing all the ordinary experience of mankind. The abbot was struck by the energy of his expressions, and felt that respect for the superiority of the palmer's mind, which makes so strong and so favourable an impression on a man of sense, when such superiority is unexpectedly and unpretendingly brought before him.

Yet, in the midst of his enthusiasm, there was a degree of melancholy in the palmer, that seemed constantly to keep it in check ; for, after he had spoken with the utmost animation, he would sink into silence and abstraction, till he was again roused to exertion by some question he could not well avoid. The abbot soon observed

that melancholy was his principal characteristic ; all he said or did was coloured by it, even as a piece of painted glass gives its own hue to whatever objects may be seen through its medium. But though so sad, there was nothing harsh or unpleasant in his manner. The palmer's was evidently the melancholy of a sensitive and a suffering heart, not of a discontented or disappointed spirit ; hence was it gentle.

The abbot spoke of Jerusalem, and said he could almost envy the happiness the wanderer must have felt on first placing his foot on such sacred ground.

“ The feeling was too much akin to awe, to be called happiness,” replied the palmer ; “ a strong sense of the judgments of an offended God seized on my soul as I looked around me on that blighted land. Yet I felt that every thought of man's heart in such a region of the still existing evidences of Divine power partook of its sublimity.”

“ True,” said the abbot ; “ for that land is the still existing record of miracle.”

“The scourge of God,” exclaimed the palmer, “throughout those solitary plains, has marked with desolating stripes on every rock and vale, that his wrath has passed over an accursed land. The cities whereof trembled and stood mute, as God’s word came upon them, and they fell; and He who would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, yet shook in his wrath the cedars of Lebanon.”

“It is even so,” said the abbot; “nothing is left of the once splendid cities of Judea; and only the sepulchres of their kings remain to tell the tale of their departed power.”

“When man is no more,” replied the palmer, “how vain are all his efforts to prolong the record of his existence. The names of the tenants of those very sepulchres are unknown. The cities over which they ruled are in the dust, and with the Jews, as a people, all is now a tomb.”

“We will speak no more of that unhappy race,” said the abbot; “the subject pains us. Cædmon, hast thou thy harp at hand? A shade

of sorrow hangs on the brow of our holy palmer here ; and you, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, the dark spirit seems to be with you also. Like Saul, you shall essay what a harp can do to cheer it. Our young David here shall try his skill." Cædmon did so. He took his harp ; swept his hand lightly and rapidly over its chords ; then, with great art, played a gentle air, and stole gradually into a flow of the softest and most melancholy music. Again he led into a less pensive strain, till, at length, he gave full scope to the instrument, and rang out such a glorious measure, with all the power of the harp, making its tones speak to the heart, and rousing those who listened to a feeling of life and energy, that the spirit of sadness which had before stolen on the social hour was at once put to flight, and all were so cheered and animated by the skill of the Saxon minstrel, that even the Lord Abbot could not help showing some outward marks of his inward satisfaction ; a strong proof, as he

afterwards said, that Cædmon had indeed no equal as a harper.

The strain ended, the abbot filled the cups, and Sir Henry de Pomeroy, now restored to his better humour, smiled as in a significant manner the superior gave the health of the fair Adela de Marmoutier, and might success attend the hunting match on the lands of her kinswoman, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont.

The palmer, who, after Cædmon had done playing, had sunk again into a reverie, on hearing the last sentence, seemed to be suddenly roused to attention. In a moment he bent his keen eye on the abbot, and on Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as if he would penetrate their very thoughts. The abbot, who was quite as observing as the palmer, remarked the interest he betrayed at the mention of the young and beautiful Adela. He asked if the holy man might be known to her, or to her guardian, the Lady Alicia.

“I was formerly of this county,” said the

palmer; "and know therefore that the Lady Alicia de Beaumont is the mistress of Wilsworthy Castle. But so many years have passed since I have seen my native place, that I did not know till this day she was still alive."

"Oh, yes," said the abbot; "she has lived in the old castle, excepting when absent in Normandy, ever since the news came of her lord's death that made her the richest widow of the west. The Lady Adela, her orphan niece and her ward—the wardship purchased of the king, is also the heiress of great wealth. Many seek her hand. But she has been strangely kept from the resort of nobles and gentlemen, who would prefer their suit to her: whilst her aunt, the Lady Alicia, studies only how to fit her for a saint; and some think she will at last prevail with her fair charge to become a nun, and to bestow all her immense riches on the foundation of a religious house."

"Such would be a godly purpose," said the palmer.

“Yet one that would make all men sigh to think so sweet a rose, as report speaks this lady to be,” said Sir Henry de Pomeroy, “should be taken from the world, condemned to perpetual seclusion, and by disclaiming marriage, leave no branch of so fair a tree.”

“It were a pity it should be thus,” said the abbot; “but we have better hopes. It were a good deed, and I speak it openly,—seeing it is a matter more of honour than of mystery,—to win this prize of love and beauty,—to win her for a noble youth, such as thou art, Sir Henry de Pomeroy. Palmer, thou shalt not be so moody; thou shalt drink a cup to wish the gallant De Pomeroy God speed him in his suit to the lovely Lady Adela.”

“I may not taste another cup,” said the palmer; “but I am in charity with Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and with all men, I trust; I will therefore wish that he may speed in every suit that shall be acceptable in the eye of God. And now, Father Abbot, I would crave your leave,

for I am weary, and must depart hence at early morn, to pass from this chamber to my place of rest. Give me your benison, and suffer me to depart."

"Holy man," replied the abbot, "you have our leave, and our blessing. Cædmon!"

"My Lord."

"Summons hither the chamberlain, and bid him guide the palmer to his couch. The blessing of St. Rumon and our lady be upon your rest."

The palmer bowed and retired. As he passed on, he asked the chamberlain where Sir Henry de Pomeroy would be lodged. He was told, in the chamber at the end of the gallery appropriated for strangers.

"And the archdeacon, where is he lodged?" inquired the palmer.

"In the chamber next to yours," replied the official.

"I am too much honoured for so poor a man," said the palmer; "the janitor's cell would have been good enough for me. I am not worthy to be lodged near so noble a churchman."

CHAPTER XI.

O treach'rous night !

Thou lend'st thy ready veil to ev'ry treason,
And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.

HILL'S ZARA.

With whisp'ring noise, as tho' the earth around me
Did utter secret things !

The distant river, too, bears to mine ear
A dismal wailing. O mysterious night !

Thou art not silent ; many tongues hast thou.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

It was not till a late hour that the abbot and Sir Henry de Pomeroy retired to rest. When left to themselves, they had discussed with mutual energy those dark designs in which the subtle policy of Baldwin, from motives of personal ambition, and the fiery spirit and ill-directed friendship of Sir Henry de Pomeroy for

Prince John, made each take so warm a part, and caused each to play for so deep a stake in the treasonable game that was on foot. Yet, even with men so heedless of the ordinary routine of life, whilst bent on objects of such high aim, nature claimed her dues, and very weariness at last compelled them to seek repose. Soon after, all the house was still.

Nothing now was heard but the “many tongues” of night: the wind that whistled down the large old chimney; the rushing of the Tavy over its rocky bed; and, now and then, the baying of a dog, or the hooting of an owl amongst the towers and trees.

The palmer, though he had sunk on his pallet to rest, after devoutly telling his beads, had not extinguished his lamp; indeed, he seemed in no mood for sleeping: his thoughts were active, and notwithstanding there had been on this evening a settled calm about his heart, it was more the calm which a long habit of self-control can call up at will, than that conquest over feeling

from a sense of religion, that renders the mind incapable of being assailed by any of the ordinary occurrences of human life.

To support with a manly resolution a destiny which had been one of an uncommon character, to expiate by long and severe penance those things of which conscience had accused him, were the leading principles of the palmer's mind. For the rest, though his cares were sufficient, they were, he had been heard to say, of a nature which may wound but cannot corrode the heart, which is, therefore, though deeply afflicted, spared that bitterness of grief that makes sorrow as a poisoned dart, infecting whatever is most vital in the frame of man. Hence was it inferred by the few with whom he had familiarly conversed, that the palmer was a wronged man ; one more sinned against than sinning ; and that those traits of generosity and magnanimity which so often escaped him, served to prove, the injuries done to an individual by another often call forth his noblest feelings in the effort to support them ; whilst those a

man does to himself, frequently sink alike his moral and his physical being ; such is the difference between misfortune and vice. Nevertheless, though we have here mentioned the remarks made upon the wanderer by the companions of his journey, they were but the result of conjecture ; for no man knew the story of the palmer's life. Those with whom he had travelled felt an almost instinctive respect for one under so strict a vow, whilst his demeanour was, although humble and gentle, dignified, and even noble. But it is to the cell of the youthful Sir Henry de Pomeroy we must now bend our steps, and must relate what there passed on this most memorable night.

He had not, we fear, told his beads as regularly as the church of which he was a member would have required ere he slept. He had removed whatever might be cumbrous about his dress, wrapped himself in his long and large mantle, and, without more preparation, warrior-like, had thrown himself on the couch intended for his repose. But not long had he slumbered

when he was disturbed, and fancied, whilst in that dreamy state between sleeping and waking, that he heard something more than the moaning of the wind and the rush of the river, audible as were those melancholy sounds in the ancient and vaulted chamber where he slept.

He started, looked up, and beheld the palmer standing before him, holding a lamp, and gazing upon him with a countenance marked by an expression so peculiar, so different to that which had hitherto characterized it, that a sense of alarm was the first of which he became conscious on being thus suddenly aroused from his uneasy rest. Yet it was not such a feeling of fear as would have disgraced one who bore arms ; what he felt was, an instinctive terror, which will assail even the boldest heart, and make it shrink and shudder at the sudden appearance of a supposed assassin ; even as the firmest man that ever lived may feel a curdling of the blood at the unexpected sight of a viper, if he accidentally treads upon it in his path.

There was something so extraordinary in the countenance of the palmer, as he now gazed upon the youth, that, in a very great degree, it justified his fears. The whole man seemed changed; he did not look to be the same as when, with that melancholy and reverend air, he had conversed so respectfully with Abbot Baldwin, ere he went to rest. The lamp which the palmer held in his hand, casting its rays of light upward from below the head, gave an effect to the shadows of the face that was almost of an unearthly character, and the lines of the countenance, which was very pale, when thus seen, looked stronger, deeper than they did before. There was, also, in the fixed gaze of his large, black eyes a glowing expression; they darted their fierce glances upon Sir Henry from beneath a cowl which hung as low as the eyebrows over his head, and the mouth, that was agitated with a tremulous action, like a leaf as it quivers in the blast, indicated an emotion too strong to be suppressed. Indeed, every feature

seemed to betray the passions and the smothered resentments of a vindictive mind.

Surprised, astonished by the appearance of the stranger at such an hour, and evidently under the influence of such strong and inward emotions, the first thought that darted on the mind of Sir Henry de Pomeroy was, that an assassin had stolen upon his sleep to do him an injury. He sprang up, therefore, and seized his dagger, that lay near his bed.

“What !” exclaimed the palmer, “do you fear an unarmed man ? can this lamp slay you ? I have no weapon.”

Ashamed of his precipitation, Sir Henry threw down his dagger, and said, “Wherefore am I thus disturbed, and at such an hour, and in so strange a manner by you ? If you have aught to say to me, why not have spoken it ere I came to rest, or have waited till to-morrow ?”

“Peace !” said the palmer, “peace ! what I would say, even for your own sake, rash youth, must be spoken in secret. For, of our con-

ference this night must no man know, and, least of all men, Baldwin, the wily monk. Ere you will be stirring on the morrow, my purposes will compel me to quit these walls. I am not now come with so much danger to us both, for I warn you there is danger in our meeting at this hour, to be questioned by you. Answer me briefly to what I shall propose to you, and fear not."

"I fear no man whilst I wear a sword," replied Henry de Pomeroy; "but who are you, who thus address yourself to me in the accents of command? on what authority?"

"On an authority you dare not disobey, should you compel me to name it," said the palmer. "But rest assured, without further doubt, that the motive which this night prompts me to seek a conference with you, is one whose truth and honesty stands clear in the eye of the living God, before whom no thought of the heart is veiled."

There was a solemnity in the voice and manner of the palmer, as he made this appeal to a higher

power, which struck with an involuntary conviction of its sincerity the mind of Sir Henry. He looked up, and in the countenance of his strange visitant he no longer saw the indications of any struggling emotions ; they had passed away, and a settled calm once more prevailed in every feature. It was evident that the angry spirit slumbered again within his breast, after having been fearfully aroused by some sudden sting of the passions. Yet, notwithstanding that almost irresistible conviction which a solemn declaration of what is true seldom fails to produce, engaged as he was in one of the darkest intrigues of the day, Sir Henry de Pomeroy did not think himself warranted to promise that he would satisfy the interrogatories of the stranger without having some proof stronger than a mere assertion, that he was authorized to make them. Once more, therefore, did he press on the palmer to declare himself openly.

“It may not be,” he replied ; “seek not to know me ; I should be injurious to you did I linger near you. May be you have yet to learn,

for you are young in life and all its sorrows, that a mind ill at ease with itself saddens other minds that come in contact with it."

"It may be so," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy ; "but still, to me you are a stranger, and even now you answer wide from the mark ; but I am resolved, and ere I entertain further parley with you, I must be better satisfied."

"It must be told then," said the palmer, in a low voice, as if thinking aloud, rather than speaking to another. "Young sir, know you this token?" He placed his hand within the folds of his gown as he spoke, and, from some pocket concealed under the drapery, drew forth and presented to Sir Henry de Pomeroy a silver spur.

Had the palmer been a magician, presenting to the youthful knight his fabled glass, in which the events of a whole life are said to be made to pass before the sight in their shadowy outlines of fear and wonder at a glance, it could not have produced a greater or more instan-

taneous effect. He started like the affrighted deer roused by the bugle of the hunter ; he turned pale as death, trembled, doubted, looked at the palmer, stretched forth his hand, and grasped the silver spur, as he exclaimed in a voice that had in it a tone of awe, "O Heaven ! my father's token !"

"Ay," said the palmer, "it was thy father's token ; that token on which he gaged a life, and lost it."

"And who art thou, who art now possessed of it ? Oh ! tell me, tell me, if you have pity on the feelings of a son, tell me more ; you, who possess that token, you must know the fearful tale of his death,—the awful nature of his accusation,—the horrid doubts of his innocence,—the shame,—do I, his son, do I still live to speak it ?—the shame, the dishonour that clings to his memory, unredressed ! Give me, then, if it be in the power of man to give it, give me but so much knowledge of the facts as may enable me to do him justice ; to clear away the cloud

that has darkened the lustre of his once honourable name? Do this, and I will fulfil your bidding, and bless you as my father's friend."

"Thus far have I suffered you to give vent to the feelings of your soul," said the palmer: "now listen, and mark me well; for every word I utter is of import. How many years have passed since you last saw your father?"

"More than seventeen," replied Sir Henry de Pomeroy; "I was but a child when he quitted England for the Holy Land. Where or how he fell I need not say, since the possession of that lost token assures me all the fatal tale is known to you."

"But how know you," said the palmer, in a manner the most emphatic,—“how know you this is the true token, seeing you were so young when your father died?"

"The fellow of that spur, which my father retained when he pledged the one you have this night produced as his gage of honour and of battle, is still in my keeping."

“One question more,” said the palmer: “know you the history of this token, long held so precious by your father’s house?”

“I do,” replied the youthful knight. “The silver spurs were won in battle, by our renowned ancestor, the brave Sir Ralph de Pomeroy; who, at the battle of Tours in France, took them from an infidel leader whom he slew, when he seized the crescent, the standard of the Moors. He laid both crescent and spurs at the feet of his commander, Charles Martel: both were restored to the brave warrior, who was long the glory of our race; and as Charles Martel himself buckled them on Sir Ralph’s feet, after the victory, he vowed that ever after the silver spurs should be the pledge of honour with all the descendants of his house, and that if any one bearing the name of De Pomeroy should be accused of a breach of loyalty, or of good faith, he should instantly give in token one of those silver spurs, and either retrieve it with his honour, pure as the virgin ore of which it is

composed, or forfeit his life in the attempt. Now know you wherefore I can recognise the token? It is also of matchless workmanship. At the Castle of Berry Pomeroy, there lies the other spur, tarnished and dishonoured, wanting its fellow."

"Thy father lost it," said the palmer; "he was accused in a point most vital to his honour—he pledged the silver spur that he would disprove the charge in single combat. The combat was allowed,—he drew the sword to redeem his pledge, and lost his life in the attempt."

"But I, his son, live to do justice to his memory," replied Henry de Pomeroy; "and though his cruel adversary who slew him, is now, also, no more, yet let but a man of his blood, having the heart of a man within his bosom,—let him but now aver my father perished justly, and I will meet him, and never part till one of us bites the dust."

"There spoke the spirit of a Pomeroy," exclaimed the palmer, surprised into admiration

at the gallant demeanour of the young knight in support of his father's honour and his fame.

"Yet, one thing I would ask," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy; "how came *you* by the spur? There is the wonder; for he who slew my father, it is well known to all men, is dead. How came you by such a token? did you know the man who vanquished a De Pomeroy? or did you know my father?"

"I did," replied the palmer; "your father was once my most trusted friend. I—but my vow;—did I speak more I should infringe on that. Rest, therefore, satisfied with what I have already said. The time may come when I may be at liberty to speak freely; when mystery shall no longer hang upon my words, to cloud their import. My vow expires on the eve of St. John's day. It binds me to pass that day in penance, at the shrine of St. Michael, in the chapel dedicated to him in the far-famed Cornish Mount. Till the eve of St. John I must say no more. Restore to me then the lost token;

and most solemnly do I pledge my word, as a man who has known gentle nurture, and the noble strife of arms, that you shall then, if you will, have the opportunity you so earnestly desire to do justice to your dead father's name."

"On these terms I herewith restore to you the token," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as he once more put the palmer in possession of the forfeited silver spur.

"It is a compact," said the palmer; "I will not fail you. Now will you answer to such questions as, on this night with so much peril to myself, I have sought you purposely to have answered. Will you make reply?"

"I will, and resolutely," said De Pomeroy; "for I have now neither doubts nor fears, but such as my sword must satisfy hereafter."

"Tell me then," continued the palmer, "is it not your purpose, and as Abbot Baldwin was proud to intimate, at his suggestion, to endeavour to win for your bride the rich Norman heiress, Adela de Marmoutier?"

“It is,” replied the youthful knight.

“What know you of her?” inquired the palmer.

“Nothing more,” said De Pomeroy, “than is known to all men; that the Lady Adela is young, good, beautiful, an orphan, an heiress, and ward to her kinswoman, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, the right of her guardianship being purchased from the king.”

“Did you never hear,” said the palmer, “that in Normandy, where she was born, there was some mystery about the fair child Adela — about her mother’s sudden death on the day of the child’s birth?—ay, and that strange suspicions were whispered about a Jewish nurse?”

“A Jewish nurse!—a Jewish nurse to the child of a Christian baron, and he one of the noblest of Normandy! I will not believe it. It cannot be true. It cannot be that a Christian infant was ever intrusted to the care of an Israelitish woman—to draw life from the bosom of one

of that accursed race now loathed and trampled on by all the world.” *

“ Yet are there those in Normandy,” said the palmer, “ who will tell you that this lovely Adela has some taint of the blood of Israel, by such a means ; that no gentleman would match with her. If you wed her you are undone, a lost, a ruined man.”

“ What ! ” exclaimed Sir Henry de Pomeroy, “ because some idle tale has gained ground that this lovely creature was nurtured by a Jewess,—in a time, may be of necessity, when the child’s mother, who died in the hour of her birth, could not sustain her infant at her own bosom,—shall I be affrighted so as to give up my hopes and my suit ? And now I think again, grant that it

* At the date of our narrative (when the cruelest persecutions of the Jews were at their height) so great was the spirit of hatred and superstition, that any child (though of Christian parents) suckled by a Jewish woman, was held as tainted, and unfit to match with a family of any rank.

were true, I might apply to Rome, state the circumstances, and obtain a dispensation to wed by the power of the church."

"It could not be. Oh! there is more in this—more than you may know, or I may tell," replied the palmer; "but as you value peace and conscience,—as you would have a heart at rest within itself,—seek not this lady. Shun the path that would lead you to the bower of this fair one, or more fatal will she be to you than were the poisoned fang did you take to your bosom the silver spotted snake."

"These are fearful warnings,—there is some mystery here," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy. "I do beseech you, tell me more? Reveal to me the truth; for there is that in your manner, that will not let me doubt. I do believe you speak on more assurance than the report of idle tongues. Satisfy my mind; give what you so darkly shadow forth, a form and shape, or let it no more appear."

“ I must not speak more plainly,” replied the palmer ; “ yet know, brave youth, marvellous, incomprehensible as it may now seem to you, yet on the eve of St. John, when I shall fulfil to you my compact respecting the silver spur, what I shall then reveal touching that pledge of honour lost, will also fully disclose to you those things to which I have but darkly alluded, concerning the Lady Adela. In the interval, let not a thought wander towards her; seek her not; expose not thyself to a danger that may destroy thy peace ; for all men say she is lovely beyond all compare, pure in innocence, sweet as the summer rose in beauty. Shun, then, her presence, or that beauty may become to thee, as an inauspicious star, thy destiny for evil ; she may remain to thee through all thy after years, but as the dream of thy early life, when all its hopes are dead. Believe me, I speak this for thy good alone ; believe me, I am not thy enemy. I am no man’s enemy now.”

“ Yet when I first beheld you, this night,”

said Sir Henry, "you looked upon me, holy palmer, with a countenance that spoke a tale of fearful passion. What am I to think of this."

"Think," replied the palmer, "that there are moments when sudden feelings, called forth by those inexplicable links of circumstance that connect the present with the past, will arise with fearful power within the breast; such feelings were mine when I first, on this night, stole upon thy rest. I looked on thee sleeping, and thought thou didst resemble — no matter whom I remembered — but no more of this. Wilt thou give me thy word, never to seek the Lady Adela de Marmoutier till our conference shall be past on the eve of St. John."

"Never!" exclaimed Sir Henry; "I will never give a promise, that I have no purpose to fulfil. I will see Adela,—it may be woo her, win her, wed her. Who shall say me nay?"

"That would I," said the palmer, "did she stand with her plighted hand in thine, even at

the altar's foot. But words boot not. Thou wilt keep the appointed time? In peace, or in war, over land, over sea, through calm or in storm, thou wilt meet me in the chapel of St Michael's Mount, on the eve of St. John. Thou wilt there maintain what thou hast this night spoken, in vindication of thy father's blighted fame; or thou wilt yield him to have been justly vanquished, slain by the judgment of God; for it was to the judgment of God that he referred his cause in that most fearful quarrel."

"I will do this," replied Sir Henry de Pome-roy, and then, according to the custom of the age in matters of solemn compact, he repeated exactly the words of the other party, saying — "At the appointed time on the eve of St. John, in peace or in war, over land, over sea, through calm or through storm, I will meet thee in the chapel of St. Michael's Mount, and there will I avouch, even at the altar's foot, my father's honour as untainted, and will afterwards main-

tain the same with lance or sword, in any way of battle."

"It is well," said the palmer; "and that you may do this without let or hinderance, beware of Abbot Baldwin; trust not that wily monk with the subject of this night's conference. Name me not to him more than as his pilgrim guest. And oh! brave youth,—you, who have so free a spirit to peril life in the defence of a father's blighted memory, do not cast away that life as a thing of little price. You are leagued with dangerous men; with those who will employ you for their own ends, but when such ends are once gained, will cast you off even as they would a worn piece of armour that is no longer needed for their use. Whilst, if they fail, be sure of it, the Earl of Mortaigne would send your head, were it demanded, as a peace offering to his brother Richard, (should Richard once more return to rule over his own realm,) as freely as he would cast the head of the commonest criminal to the carrion

birds around the block. His self-love is absolute. Believe me, the ungrateful scruple not to become the betrayer ; and is not John an ingrate to his noble brother ? Trust no such man. Farewell ! keep my counsel, act upon it, and till the eve of St. John, again farewell.”

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